THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 13 June, 1931 Number 6

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month
WAR MANŒUVRES R.P.D.

Which Way Out of the Crisis?
WILLIAM RUST

Indian Mill Owners Cry Halt!
BERNARD HOUGHTON

Recent Events in Australia
DAN RICHARDS

The Attack on the Engineers
EDMUND FROW

Labour Imperialism and East Africa
G. PADMORE

Marxism and the National Problem
J. STALIN

World of Labour :: Book Review

Published at
79 WARREN STREET, LONDON, W.1.

PRICE SIXPENCE

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Facts and Figures

on the Workers' Struggles and the Application of the Vth R.I.L.U. Congress Decisions, read the

R.I.L.U. MAGAZINE

(Official Organ of the Red International of Labour Union).

PUBLISHED FORTNIGHTLY

3d. per copy

Special Subscription rates to readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY, 4/- per year. :: Order from

91 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1

The only American Monthly of Workers' Art and Literature.

THE

NEW MASSES

Contributors: Michael Gold, John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair—other noted writers.

Each Month: SHORT STORIES, ARTICLES, POEMS, BOOK REVIEWS, CINEMA, and a WORKERS' ART SECTION devoted to workers' cultural activities in America and abroad.

Drawings and cartoons in each issue by *twenty leading American Artists.*

Trial Subscription:

70 Cents for Four Months.

NEW MASSES, 112 E.19 ST., NEW YORK.

Do you read regularly

THE EDUCATIONAL WORKER

THE ORGAN OF THE

Educational Workers' League

(LATE TEACHERS' LABOUR LEAGUE)

It is the only publication dealing with the problems of Teachers, Schools and Scholars from a militant working class point of view.

Price 2½d. per month, or 2/6 per annum, post free

Out on the first of the month

Order now from **Manager, 9 Eastbourne Rd., London, W.4.**

1930 BOUND VOLUMES

OF

LABOUR MONTHLY

Your separate copies are too useful and informative to lose, so why not exchange them for a bound volume in attractive blue cloth with a gold lettered title? For an exchange we only charge 4/6. *The ordinary price of this volume (volume XII.) is* 10/6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 13 JUNE, 1931 NUMBER 6

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 323
WAR MANŒUVRES *By* R. P. D.

Which Way Out of the Crisis? - - - ,, 339
By WILLIAM RUST

Indian Mill-Owners Cry Halt! - - ,, 344
By BERNARD HOUGHTON

Recent Events in Australia - - - ,, 352
By DAN RICHARDS

The Attack on the Engineers - - - ,, 358
By EDMUND FROW

Labour Imperialism and East Africa - - ,, 366
By G. PADMORE

Marxism and the National Problem - - ,, 374
By J. STALIN

World of Labour - - - - ,, 381
Burma

Book Review - - - - - ,, 383
Population Theory and the Class Struggle *By* J. R. S.

Published at
79 WARREN STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:
79 WARREN STREET, W.1
Telephone—MUSEUM 4079

¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him, or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

1931: Reduced Subscription Rates
[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles:

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad:

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative:—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

Advertisement Rates on application

BOUND VOLUMES

Volume I	£5 0s. 0d.	*Volume VII*	15s. 6d.
Volume II	£3 3s. 0d.	*Volume VIII*	10s. 6d.
Volume III	£3 3s. 0d.	*Volume IX*	10s. 6d.
Volume IV	£2 2s. 0d.	*Volume X*	10s. 6d.
Volume V	£1 10s. 0d.	*Volume XI*	10s. 6d.
Volume VI	- 15s. 6d.	*Volume XII*	10s. 6d.

Loose copies of last five volumes can be exchanged for a bound volume for 4s. 6d.

The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York, N.Y., as well as in the annual index with each December Issue.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES OF THE MONTH

International Conferences—War Preparations—Extending Crisis —A Banker's Outlook—Cutting Costs—Fascism—War on Socialism—"Economic Menace" Propaganda—Conscious Hypocrisy—A Cleft Stick—Litvinov at Geneva—Pact of Economic Non-Aggression—Economic Unification Plans—Pan-Europe—Real Aims —The Norman Plan—"Agrarian Europe"—Manœuvres Towards War

THE present crisis is the second great historical condemnation on a world scale of capitalist rule—the demonstration on a gigantic scale that the powers of production have outgrown capitalism, and that the capitalist class is socially and morally bankrupt and unable to lead or control the situation it has created. The first exposure and warning was the world war. The sequel to that was the beginning of the world socialist revolution. But over the greater part of the capitalist world the revolution was checked; the warning was not taken. The inevitable consequence of the restoration of capitalism is the present world economic crisis, which already, as an economic crisis, exceeds all preceding in capitalist history. Once again the powers of production, greater than ever, burst against the walls of capitalism, producing havoc and misery. To what is the crisis leading? Daily the answer becomes clearer. International conference succeeds international conference in hastening series to solve the problems of capitalism's sickness—now debts, now tariffs, now armaments, now economic divisions, &c. All reach the same outcome—deadlock, antagonisms, rival manœuvrings and combinations, the inability of capitalism to solve its problems or arrest the drive to chaos. But just this impasse of any constructive solution drives all forces the harder to the only final outcome that can be realised within the conditions of capitalism

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—war. And because the crisis of capitalism is in ever sharper contrast to the advance of socialism, the drive to war is directed more and more against this as the supreme enemy, against, that is to say, the one element that has demonstrated its power to bring order and a constructive solution to the world—against socialism and the socialist revolution. This is the present situation with which we are faced.

ON all sides there is now open recognition of the gathering war situation—no longer in the expression of a few, but as the commonplace of all expressions. "As the World Disarmament Conference draws nearer," writes the *Times*, "so the unrest and insecurity in Europe increase." "The whole European atmosphere," writes the American journalist, F. H. Simonds, "is to-day more tense than at any time since the occupation of the Ruhr, and in many unpleasant details recalls the conditions of the immediate pre-war period." "The cause of peace is drifting," declares the *Observer*; "despite the League, Europe is again divided into two camps as before the war." Signs of this are seen on all sides. The presidential election of Doumer, "the man of war" (that is, the advance from war-preparation under the cover of peace to a more open-war preparation and brandishing of the sword), recalling the presidential election of Poincaré in 1913. The growth of the Nazis and national sentiment against Versailles in Germany. The breakdown of the much-boosted British-French-Italian Naval Agreement. The unconcealed division of forces at Geneva over the Austro-German Customs Union and the French counter-plan. The friction and manœuvrings over the British-German conversations. The open fight of opposing blocs over the directorships of the International Bank. All these and a dozen similar signs stand out in the day-to-day movement of events. But they are only symptoms of a deeper process. The essential process is that the economic crisis is still extending in its scope, is forcing out every conflict and antagonism, and defeating every attempt to find a peaceful solution.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BEJAY CALLING!

"JOIN the Workah's Parteh!" New All-Talking Production

FEATURING Sir Oswald, Lady Cynthia, and Mr. Strachey.

ALL the articles by BEJAY which have delighted *Daily Worker* readers every Saturday are being reproduced in book form. The original illustrations, of which the above is a sample, will be a feature of the book.

THIS ninety-six page fund of fun and propaganda, handsomely produced, will have a special cover design by BEJAY and a newly written introductory article by him.

BEJAY'S book is priceless: but it costs you only 1s., postage 1½d.; in quantities of six and over, 9d. per copy —postage 6d. for six copies, 9d. for 12. Send in your order TO-DAY to the *Daily Worker*, 41 Tabernacle Street, London, E.C. 2. There's a form below asking to be filled in.

Order Bejay's Book Now

ORDER FORM

To the DAILY WORKER 41 *Tabernacle Street, London, E.C.* 2.

Please send me as soon as possible BEJAY'S BOOK (..... copies) for which I enclose .....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

L M. .....

THE UTOPIA PRESS LTD. (T.U.), 44, Worship Street, London, E.C.2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE crisis is still extending. Already in 1930 it was beating records. But the drop so far in 1931 is far exceeding 1930, and leaving 1930 like a high level. Take the United States, the central focus of the crisis. A year ago, in May, 1930, Hoover, addressing the Chambers of Commerce, declared :

> We have been passing through one of those great economic storms which periodically bring hardship and suffering upon our people. While the crash only took place six months ago, I am convinced *we have now passed the worst*, and with continued unity of effort we shall rapidly recover. (New York *Financial and Commercial Chronicle*, May 10, 1930.)

That was in May, 1930. What was the position then ? American exports for April, 1930, had fallen 22 per cent. on the previous year, from 426 million dollars to 334 millions. This, declared the all-wise spokesman of " scientific " capitalism, Hoover, was the bottom ; we " have now passed the worst." And now what is the position twelve months later ? American exports for April, 1931, stand at 217 million dollars, or a further drop of 35 per cent. The biggest collapse has come *after* the pontiffs of capitalism had said the crisis was over. The same shows for Germany, for France (where the main weight of the crisis has only come this year) and for Britain. The volume of British exports—volume, not prices, *i.e.*, corrected by the Board of Trade to allow for the price drop—fell during 1930 from 99.9 per cent. of 1924 in the first quarter to 82.7 per cent. in the last quarter ; by the first quarter of 1931 it fell to 62.9 per cent. The index of British industrial production (London and Cambridge Economic Service index, based on 1924 as 100) fell from 98.5 in 1930 to 84.8 in the first quarter of 1931. The biggest drop has everywhere come with this year.

RETURNING from a visit to America, the American economic adviser to the Bank of England, Professor O. M. W. Sprague, gave some views on the crisis which he made clear reflected the outlook of the responsible directors of the leading central banks—that is, of the principal directors of modern capitalism. He said that

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> *He would gladly have discovered some signs of economic recovery in America. He was utterly unable to find any, but rather all sorts of indications that the depression was becoming more acute, if not chronic.* America, two years ago in the enjoyment of a bounding prosperity, was now in the same boat with the rest of the world, experiencing the most severe depression of this century, and one perhaps as severe as any in her history. *There was no agreement about the causes of the depression, and certainly no agreement upon the remedy.*

As against the credit-and-currency school, who failed to recognise that the fall in prices was a symptom and not a cause, the view of the central banks was that manufacturing costs and prices must be brought down to a level with agricultural prices. This would need a general cutting of the costs of production, which raised awkward political problems.

> *One possible way of effecting adjustments was by dictatorship;* there were countries in which it had been found possible by the ukase of a central authority to adjust wages, salaries, rents and also retail prices in order to put the country into a somewhat better economic condition.

To accomplish the same task in Britain through democratic forms was not easy.

> One could not get anywhere merely by reducing the wages of transport workers by 2½ per cent.

"Political leadership" was necessary. It was necessary to make changes to put the country "in a better competitive position";

> to put some of the countries' industries into shape to compete at a profit with the rest of the world.

Finally, the warning which completes this valuable statement of the inspiring leadership of capitalism in the crisis. If something were not done, if "planned arrangement" were not carried out

> *Then there could be nothing in the future for this country but a slow decline—or, if one generalised for the individualistic Western world, a slow decline relative to the possibilities of the competing regime which was being developed in Russia.* (*Times*, May 13, 1931.)

Thus the Economic Adviser of the Bank of England.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS statement is significant enough to be worth examining. It expresses the typical trends of current capitalist thought more honestly and clearly than is usual. It begins, as we see, with a confession of bankruptcy. There is no sign of the crisis lifting ; it gets worse rather than better ; no one knows the cause ; no one knows the remedy. Such is the approach to the problem of overwhelming abundance and productive power alongside overwhelming poverty ; it is left as a mysterious visitation. After this highly scientific opening, attention is concentrated on the immediate practical steps to cut costs in order to increase competitive power. Three dominant lines of thought stand out, all characteristic of the present stage of capitalism. First, costs of production must be cut drastically ; a mere $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. cut in wages is a bagatelle compared to what is needed. But what is meant by cutting the costs of production ? Is it meant that the enormous claims of capital, which are the real burden on production, and which have actually doubled in weight in the past ten years, must be cut ? Not at all. The reference is specific. The reference is to " wages, salaries, rents and prices "—but not to interest and profits. It is impossible not to be reminded of the pregnant saying of old Adam Smith, their own father of learning :

> Our merchants and master-manufacturers complain much of the bad effects of high wages in raising the price, and thereby lessening the sale of their goods both at home and abroad. They say nothing concerning the bad effect of high profits. They are silent with regard to the pernicious effects of their own gains. They complain only of those of other people. (*Wealth of Nations* I., 10, ii.)

But that old home-thrust belongs still to the primitive days of capitalism, to the days of the speculative merchant and manufacturer, before the joint stock company type was developed. The peculiar character of modern monopoly capitalism is marked, not only by the high profits the monopolies are able to maintain in bad times, but also by the enormous and growing volume of capital in the shape of State bonds, corporation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bonds, bonds and debentures of the big trusts, often semi-official and guaranteed by the State (the public utility company type so favoured by the Labour Government as " socialism," like the London Transport Bill), all of which constitute a fixed charge on production, whatever the state of trade, and even increase their weight in times of depression. To meet this cuts are inevitable. So the vicious circle goes on. Increased productive power diminishes employment, lowers prices and increases competition. This automatically increases the claims of capital, at the same time as it diminishes the market. And the only solution is found in more cuts, because the real solution—the wiping out of capital charges, *i.e.*, real socialisation which can alone free production and utilise the increased productive power—cannot be faced.

So far this is common ground to every capitalist utterance. It is the direct connection of thought with what follows that is important to note. The second key line is that *political* means are necessary to carry out this drastic process. And here the line of thought is directly connected to the conception of " dictatorship " as the means. The success of the Brüning-Hindenburg line of dictatorship in Germany is the object of envious reference. There could be no clearer demonstration of the significance of fascism at the present stage of capitalism as an *alternative method* of the capitalist dictatorship, consciously and calculatingly envisaged by the old hands of capitalism, to meet a special stage. Still more significant is the consideration of the possibility of adapting the same emergency programme which would be carried out by a dictatorship to the nominal forms of " democracy." It is here that comes in the special role at the present point of the Labour Party—of social fascism. The German Social Democratic Party supports and assists the Brüning-Hindenburg dictatorship to carry through its emergency programme as the supposed " lesser evil " to " save the country from fascism " ; and by so doing actually facilitates the transformation of the State in the direction of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fascism and makes possible the success of the attack on the workers. In the same way the Labour Government carries through the capitalist attack on the workers, where a Baldwin Government, and still more any more openly violent form, would arouse the wholesale opposition of the working class. Finance-capital looks on " democracy " and " dictatorship " as alternative means, according to circumstances, to carry through its programme.

THE third dominant line of thought, which concludes the whole, is the conscious opposition of the " Western world " and " Russia " as the supreme issue raised by the crisis. This is here set out without any of the usual pretences of " dumping," the " menace of slave labour," &c. The crisis is recognised as confronting capitalism with its supreme trial. Previous crises could be left to be muddled through in one way or another ; the burdens would inevitably fall on to the shoulders of the workers and ruined small capitalists ; big capital would emerge the stronger, and was in no danger ; things could be left peaceably to take their course, because there was no alternative visible. The difference to-day is that the alternative is now visible to all, and grows in strength. Therefore every desperate measure must be taken by capitalism, including drastic cuts, and dictatorship if necessary, to solve its problems and establish " planned arrangement." Otherwise " slow decline " is already foreseen by this representative of the Bank of England as the only future for the whole Western capitalist world " relative to the possibilities of the competing regime which was being developed in Russia." But supposing all the drastic measures cannot solve the deeper crisis, which is inherent in the present stage of capitalism and growth of the forces of production ? Supposing " planned arrangement " and capitalism are contradictions in terms ? What then ? No answer is provided by this more discreet spokesman. But all the other voices of capitalism provide the answer in stentorian tones. If socialism grows, and capitalism declines, then the growth of socialism

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must be smashed by any and every means—economic boycott, financial boycott, war. There is no other course for capitalism. Carthago delenda est.

"THE world crisis will not be overcome," declares the British knight, Sir Henri Deterding, in an interview to the Bucarest *Rador*, "until the Soviet system has ceased to exist." And in the same interview he goes on to urge that "Europe must build its united economic front." European capitalist unification to smash the Soviet order—this is the key thought of the present stage of international politics, through all the rival groupings and combinations. What is expressed with brutal frankness by such a ruling brigand of imperialist policy as Deterding, or with no less clearness by such a theoretical exponent as the founder of the Pan-Europe movement, Coudenhove-Kalergi (who has recently declared that the alternative before Pan-Europe is "War for life and death or bolshevik revolution"), has to be turned into slightly more diplomatic language in varying forms by the Briands, Baldwins and Hendersons. These have to produce a propaganda to veil the bare issue of the fight for the profit-makers against socialism. Every form is tried in turn. The religious horse was flogged hard in 1930, but did not carry far. The "militarist" horse is tried next, but breaks down on the Soviet total disarmament proposals, refused by the capitalist states. So is tried now the present line of the "economic menace" of the Five-Year Plan, as threatening to swamp the world with a "flood of cheap goods" on a basis of "dumping" and "slave labour." By this means the anger and discontent arising from the crisis of capitalism is to be turned to the channels of the anti-Soviet campaign.

THIS propaganda, taken at its face value, is conscious hypocrisy. It is not only that the obvious facts of the still infinitesimal proportion of Soviet exports to world exports make it fantastic. But taken even as a would-be

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plausible theory, it breaks down completely by their own theoretical measures. For what is this alleged threatening competition of which they express such fear? What is it makes it so dangerous, coming as it does from a country with the handicap of a long-arrested backward development? It is, they explain, because it is an enormous State economic organisation, covering one hundred and fifty million people. Indeed? But have they not taught from a thousand platforms, have they not proclaimed in a thousand text-books, that any State economic organisation is bound to be utterly incompetent, inefficient, wasteful, unproductive and in every way unfit to compete with private enterprise? How then can they have any fear of it? Let us have the charity to assume that they were honest in proclaiming this theory, and not consciously deceiving the workers with a lie; and it then follows that they cannot be honest now in pretending to be frightened of this competition. But, they go on to explain, this competition is menacing because this State organisation is able to use slave-labour, whereas we have to pay for wage-labour and cannot compete. (Never mind the facts for the moment; let them have their fairy tales; they cannot distinguish between the real slavery of one class to another in the "free labour" of capitalist society, and the collective discipline of a classless society, in which the workers are the owners and rulers.) So? The menace of the competition is because of slave-labour? But is not the maxim a commonplace in every elementary economic text-book, and this time not merely in theory, but based on experience, that slave-labour is the most costly, wasteful inefficient form of labour and invariably breaks down, when brought into competition with wage-labour. How, then, can they fear this competition?

THE truth is, they are in a cleft stick. Either they must abandon all their propaganda against socialism; must admit that the soviet economic organisation is a more scientific, efficient organisation, and that the form of labour, so far from being slave-labour, is an obviously higher form of labour, as easily outstripping wage-labour, as wage-labour outstrips

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slave-labour. Or they must abandon their propaganda of the terrible competitive menace of this form of organisation. One or the other. But they want to have it both ways. They want at once to insist on the utterly inefficient and slave character of this form of organisation, and at the same time to insist on the invincible menace of its competition to capitalist industry. The very fact that they want to use both forms of argument simultaneously, reveals the insincere propaganda character of the whole argument.

BUT, indeed, the actual facts show the very opposite of the supposed economic menace, as Litvinov was easily able to show, unanswerably and without answer, at Geneva. So far from the prosperity and advance of the Soviet Union serving to increase the crisis of the capitalist world in decline, it served actually, as an immediate economic factor, to mitigate that crisis, since it furnished the one expanding market. When British exports fell overwhelmingly in every direction in the first quarter of 1931, compared with a year before, they rose in the one direction of the Soviet Union. A large and increasing proportion of the machinery exports of every industrial country found their market in the Soviet Union. 53 per cent. of American tractor exports, 23 per cent. of German agricultural machinery exports, 11 per cent. of British textile machinery exports, owed their market to the Soviet Union. And indeed we are reaching a point, as a very interesting article in a recent issue of the *Automobile Engineer* has pointed out, when " the latest machine tools now being developed in America cannot even be economically used in the United States " (their production is too high for the possibilities of the market within capitalism), and their only market is for export to the Soviet Union, where alone there is continuously expanding demand.

STILL more overwhelming are the facts on dumping. For dumping is, of course, precisely the capitalist method—the artificial maintenance by tariffs of a high price in the home market in order to sell at a cheap price in

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the world market. This has reached an extreme point in the present stage of capitalism, as hundreds of examples could illustrate. And just here Litvinov was able to provide the decisive answer to the whole propaganda by the test of a practical proposal—the proposal of a pact of economic non-aggression, and a convention by which every State would undertake to see that no distinction was made between home prices and export prices. Readiness to accept such a principle is the decisive test of dumping. The Soviet Union offered this. Not a single capitalist State would accept or even consider it. This demonstration is a crushing one. The rejection of the pact of economic non-aggression by the united forces of capitalism is as decisive and historically significant in the economic field as the rejection of the total disarmament proposals four years ago and ever since in the military field. It is the demonstration, not only of the pacific rôle of the Soviet Union, but of the aggressive rôle of capitalism.

WHAT is the line of policy of capitalism? "Economic unification," the creation of "larger economic units," transcending the existing State divisions, with special reference to Europe, is now the keynote of capitalist propaganda. But the plans which are put forward behind this general banner bear a peculiar character. We have seen already the "Empire economic unity" propaganda in England, which is temporarily in the background and not showing signs of making much progress in the coming conference at Ottawa. We have further the French plan of "Pan-Europe," which thinly conceals the maintenance of French hegemony in Europe. There emerge at the same time to the front the German plans of Central European economic federation, beginning with Germany and Austria, and extending to Hungary, Rumania and Jugoslavia. Then we have the Norman Plan for a British-American financial consortium, whose operations are to have special bearing on the organisation of Central and Eastern Europe. What is the common feature of all these plans? In the first place, beneath their alleged "international"

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

character, they all bear visibly the reality of a striving towards a particular enlarged imperialist bloc, in rivalry with other blocs. So far, they represent simply an extension of imperialist antagonisms, and not in any sense a move to internationalism. But that is only one side. At the same time there is widespread and increasing recognition in the capitalist camp of the necessity of a genuinely common front in one direction, and in one direction only, against the Soviet Union. Every one of these plans, when closely examined, bears a point very visibly directed against the Soviet Union. But the building of a common front of capitalism raises at once the question where the leadership shall lie. And just here at once arises the antagonism. So we get the peculiar character of the present situation, which is marked by an intensification of imperialist antagonisms, just at the same time as the movement grows stronger towards a common front against the Soviet Union.

TAKE the Pan-Europe plan. Is the Pan-Europe plan a simple harmless striving towards closer co-operation on the geographical basis of Europe? Or is it a conscious striving towards an alignment on a social basis of capitalist Europe, under French leadership, against the Soviet Union. The simple-hearted Brailsford, wilfully blind as always to every reality of capitalist policy, takes it as the former :

> Of late France has sought to solve this economic problem in a still more ambitious way, and one should not forget that it was from an Austrian schemer that M. Briand took over his plan for a United States of Europe. But that grandiose idea will realise itself slowly, if at all, and *when it materialises it will probably be as a modest but very useful scheme for the elimination of needless obstacles to trade* over the river and railway systems of Europe, the better regulation of aerial transport, and the international sale of electric power. Politics it will not touch, nor is it likely to lower tariffs. (*New Leader*, April 17, 1931.)

What a sheep's picture of the " modest," " useful " plans of the wolf! But if that were the case, if the basis were the simple geographical basis of Europe, why then the anxiety to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exclude the Soviet Union, which constitutes 45 per cent. of Europe? Why the extreme reluctance to admit even in a consultative capacity on certain economic questions? Briand gave the whole case away, when he said in the heat of the discussion at the January meeting on the question of Soviet entry, that there were many important questions to discuss which could not be discussed in the presence of the Soviet Union, and instanced, not only the question of passports, but also Article 16 (the notorious war article) of the League Covenant.

BUT indeed the social, and not the geographical, basis is obvious, and is openly proclaimed by the author of the scheme, Coudenhove-Kalergi. In his recent pamphlet, *The ABC of Pan-Europe*, he stresses that Europe must develop union against the Russian danger, and organise a single army; that Pan-Europe should include Britain and Turkey, although the majority of their territory is outside Europe, but not Russia.

> So long as this opposition exists between Russia and Europe, the entry of Russia into the European bloc is neither possible nor desirable. But if the social system in Russia should be made similar to Europe, then the Russian question can be again considered.

The overthrow of the Soviet regime is here plainly set out as the necessary condition. He goes on to note with special pleasure the support of Social Democracy for his proposals. Similarly in his journal, *Pan-Europa*, 1931, No. 1, he writes on "The Soviet Union and Ourselves":

> Pan-Europe with Russia would lose its soul. It would lose its meaning. It would be dead before it began to live.
>
> Europe must close its economic front against the Russian state trust.

All minor differences should give way to this issue. The alternative is "war for life and death or bolshevik revolution."

TAKE again the Norman Plan, raised by Norman in his visit to America in April. An international lending combine is to be formed, with an initial capital of £20 millions and later £100 millions, based on the participation of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the biggest imperialist trusts (Imperial Chemicals, Unilevers, A.E.G., I. G. Farbengesellschaft, Sofina, Kreuger and Toll, &c.) to rationalise and organise the supply of credit and long-term capital—*in what direction?* "First and foremost, to Germany and the Eastern European countries" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 17, 1931). In other words, to just the countries that have to be bought over to the anti-Soviet bloc and sustained with plentiful capital from the West. We see here again the shadow of the notorious "Europa Consortium" plan that hung over the Genoa Conference of 1922, and that was only defeated by the strong stand of the Soviet Union and its successful winning of Germany to Rapallo. Fortunately, the Norman Plan, directly originating from the Bank of England, meets with the jealous opposition of American finance. "Bankers here look coldly upon any such scheme," writes the New York correspondent of the *Economist* (May 2, 1931), and insist on maintaining the full independence of the operations of American capital.

ALL these various plans concentrate especially, and with many expressions of humanitarian concern and sympathy, on the smaller agrarian States of Eastern Europe, and in the second range, on Germany and Austria, *i.e.*, on just the Border states in the first place, and in the second place on those countries whose support and co-operation in transport facilities is essential to intervention. Thus the *Times* writes on "Ailing Europe" concerning the division of industrial Western Europe and agrarian Eastern Europe:

> There are 140 million inhabitants of agrarian Europe (not including the U.S.S.R.), the produce of whose labour is largely lying unused, and whose energies are idle or wasted. (April 27, 1931.)

(How much more usefully, no doubt, could these wasted energies be employed in a war of intervention with plentiful capital from the West.) The French expressions are more open. Briand, in an interview to the journalist Saint-Brice, on his return from Geneva at the beginning of the year, declared (quoted in *Humanité*, February 23, 1931):

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> In the East and Centre of Europe there are nations which are in danger of falling an easy prey to bolshevism. We must come to their aid. There is enormous work to be done in this direction. Think of the menace still in store from the Five-Year Plan.

And, similarly, the editor of the leading organ of French heavy industry, the *Journée Industrielle*, writes after a journey in Central and Eastern Europe :

> Many of these countries are in a critical position and in need of assistance. If we do not give it them, the bolshevik contagion menaces them directly, and ourselves next. If we leave Germany to give them aid, as it is attempting, then Mitteleuropa will be re-established, and there is an end of European political stability.

Thus, against the British line of the Norman Plan (to which French policy opposes its project for an international agricultural mortgage bank), and against the German strivings towards Central European federation, to which Britain is at present giving obvious encouragement in order to weaken France, French policy endeavours to consolidate its shaking domination on the basis of Versailles and to build the anti-Soviet front under its own leadership. France, declared Briand in his impassioned speech of defence of his foreign policy to the Chamber, was called to the duty to act as " the soldier of peace."

> It had been the fashion to represent France as imperialistic, and the world had had to be disabused of that idea. To-day France appeared as the soldier of peace.

THERE could be no greater error than to build on these divisions and rival manœuvrings of the imperialist forces, in order to assume that such divisions will of themselves prevent and defeat the united anti-Soviet front. The most that they can serve is by delaying the action, to give a short breathing space of opportunity to prepare for the attack. But a rapid turn of events can still easily see a bargain on a basis of a compromise, especially if America intervenes to assist the process. The chain of reparations and debts, which still constitutes the principal immediate entanglement of world capitalism, leads to America. America is still strongly opposed, and all the more with its present deficit, to any

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cancellation or suspension of payments, as the proceedings of the Washington Conference of the International Chambers of Commerce showed, where the British-German-Italian attempt at such a move was blocked by French-American opposition. But the force of events may compel a change. Germany may be compelled by the internal situation to proclaim a moratorium, with British connivance; repudiation of the debts payments by Britain and France to America would necessarily follow; sooner than be faced by a *fait accompli*, America may attempt a bargain. A compromise may be reached on a basis of suspension of payments, and with a political sequel—the closer drawing of Germany in return to the Western front. All these are still uncertain questions of the immediate future. What is certain is that the sole decisive factor in defeating the plans of war on the Soviet Union rests, not in the divisions and rival manœuvrings of the imperialist forces, but in the strength and readiness of the working class, both inside and outside the Soviet Union.

R. P. D.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHICH WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS?

By WILLIAM RUST

THIS month sees the second anniversary of His Majesty's Labour Government with the working class in an incomparably worse situation than before the General Election; wages are lower, unemployment surges upwards and the capitalist offensive against the workers in almost every industry and the millions of unemployed is gaining momentum every day. This year's Labour Budget has been introduced and accepted, welcomed by the capitalist politicians, as the final renunciation by the Labour Party of those principles upon which it developed, and won millions of working-class votes. Snowden's Budget speech with its threat to the social services was a cynical kicking away of the corner stone of the Labour Party's professed policy of social reform and peaceful development towards Socialism. Let the apologists of the Labour Government remember that Snowden justified his violation of his Party's election promises not on grounds that the Government is a minority and must bow to superior forces, but with the argument that the limit of taxation had been reached. His Budget would have been no different if it had been put forward by a majority Labour Government instead of a minority Government in coalition with the Liberals. The Labour Party has abandoned the policy of taxing the capitalists because it has thrown overboard its professed socialist aims and accepted the principle of the Fascist Mosley that the "immediate question is not a question of the ownership but of the survival of British industry."

Who is right? Those who say that the question to-day is how to restore industry without changing ownership, or those who say that industry can only be restored by dispossessing the capitalists and establishing working-class ownership? This is broadly the issue facing the working class. It is not an academic one but a life and death question to which no worker can be indifferent. There is no middle course to be pursued but just two sides, for capitalist ownership or working-class ownership.

The world economic crisis of capitalism has already entered its second year without showing the slightest signs of abating but on the contrary continues to deepen. Dr. Sprague, an adviser to the Bank of England, recently declared that he was quite unable to see a single gleam of light on the economic horizon. Snowden, in his Budget speech, held out prospects of an economic revival but that was merely the dodge of a hack politician.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He was immediately repudiated by every responsible circle of capitalist economic thought. No serious capitalist economist contends that there is any immediate prospect of a trade revival or return to a period of relative prosperity. The economists certainly hope for the best but that is all. They cannot even agree on the cause of the crisis or the measures to be adopted to find a way out of it. According to *The Economist* of May 16, Dr. Sprague, in the speech referred to above,

> divided the various theses regarding the present crisis broadly into two classes. One attached chief importance to monetary causes and looked for the solution in an expansion of credit: the other attributed present difficulties to economic disequilibrium.

But however much the capitalists may disagree regarding the cause of the crisis and the ways and means of stimulating a revival, all of them are united in an attempt to shift the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the working class. The main capitalist thesis of meeting the crisis by shutting down production, reducing costs by rationalisation and wage cuts, and intensifying competition, is followed by the bourgeoisie in all countries and on an international scale. This view was pointedly expressed by Mr. W. L. Hichens of Cammell Laird & Co., in the *Observer* of May 17. "The trouble to-day," said Mr. Hichens, "is that the standard of living is too high—I mean, of course, in relation to other nations. I should like to see a sliding scale reduction with a minimum of 10 per cent." And this is the policy pursued by the leaders of the Labour Party, Independent Labour Party and trade unions, despite their often-repeated words to the contrary.

In the past the recurring capitalist crises have meant slump and then revival. But the present world economic crisis, which is taking place on the background of the general crisis of capitalism, is no ordinary crisis. It is a crisis of unexampled duration and intensity taking place at a time when the world capitalist system has already been mortally wounded by the triumph of socialism in one-sixth of the world, when the forces of production have enormously increased but with markets that are contracting, when the conflicts between the imperialist powers are reaching a terrible intensity and the armament burden is cursed by the capitalists themselves. Can capitalism live or will it fall in under its own weight? Private ownership of the means of production can continue but only at a terrible cost to the masses of workers and peasants. Capitalism can maintain its hold if it succeeds in carrying out its policy of destruction, slavery for the masses, imperialist war and overthrow of the Soviet Union. There will be no automatic collapse.

This is no overdrawn picture. Production is still falling in the capitalist countries, thirty-five million unemployed industrial workers search in vain for jobs, untold millions of peasants are literally starving and dying from hunger. The summer of 1931 approaches with the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so-called economic blizzard still raging—but strangely enough with one-sixth of the world, the Soviet Union, exempt from its ravages.

Armaments are so enormous that even President Hoover declares that " reduction of the gigantic waste of competition in military establishments is, in the ultimate, of an importance transcendent over all other forms of economic effort." Conference after conference is held in order to consider how production may be restricted in this poverty-stricken world—poor because it is cursed with plenty. Restrict the acreage of wheat, dismantle factories, hold up the production of sugar, these are the solutions of the capitalists.

Amongst the working class in Britain to-day there is a widespread feeling that the conditions of existence are becoming intolerable, the promises and theories of reformism are collapsing and the future looms up black and hopeless. Everywhere there is uneasiness, bitter resentment against the treacherous labour leaders and a resolute determination to resist the attacks of the capitalists. Is it not true to say that the working class movement in Britain is now approaching the parting of the ways and that the realisation is growing that the choice is between the death and slavery of capitalist ownership, and the life and freedom of working-class ownership ?

The terrific ferment amongst the working class should be obvious to all. Not a conference takes place without a sharp division between leaders and members. Weavers, miners, railwaymen are in open conflict with their officials, the resignation demand is growing in the union branches and strikes cannot be prevented despite all the efforts of the bureaucrats and police. The agenda of the last Labour Party conference reflected the keen disappointment of the rank and file, and the next is certain to record their bitter opposition. The Easter Conference of the Independent Labour Party disclosed the sharp division between those members who want to fight capitalism, and those who hide their submission to capitalism under the cover of socialist phrases. The success of the Workers' Charter Convention, attended by 788 delegates, despite many weaknesses in the preparatory work, is a sure indication of the strong feeling in favour of building a united working-class front around a fighting programme of immediate demands.

The fighting spirit amongst the workers exists, the opposition to the reformist officials is daily hardening, disillusionment in the Labour Government is reaching millions, and the united front programme upon which to fight has already been worked out by the Charter Convention. Why is it then that there is such a marking time ? The Campaign for the Workers' Charter was launched in September last year, but so far has not succeeded in leading and organising the workers in struggle against the enemy. No one should forget that the bureaucrats

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the South Wales Miners' Federation succeeded in holding the miners at work under the terms of the infamous Schiller Award despite the almost unanimous demand for strike action.

The chief obstacle to the organisation of a powerful united front of the working class in struggle against the capitalists and their labour agents is the dead weight of reformist tradition and ideology. The reformist leaders succeed in betraying the working class and keeping the lid down on discontent not merely because they have an apparatus at their command and are thus able to prevent strikes from taking place or call them off on the employers' terms. Their influence is based not only on the machinery of the trade unions and Labour Party, and the support of the capitalist state, but essentially on the power of capitalist ideas which they sow in the minds of the working class. Day in and day out the labour leaders pour out a steady stream of arguments in defence of capitalism, undermining the confidence of the workers in their own power, creating the illusion that there is still hope under the capitalist system, and that class struggle will leave the workers worse off.

Without a violent onslaught on the whole ideology of reformism, without continual discussion on the tactical problems of the class struggle, all of the most correctly-framed programmes of immediate demands and all of the most carefully-detailed plans of organisation will be of little avail. The bureaucrats will continue to hold the miners in check with the false promise of a minimum wage bill, to stifle the cotton workers' struggle with the programme of a National Control Board, to force lower benefits on the unemployed with the argument that sacrifices are necessary for a revival of industry, and to secure the acquiescence of British workers in the policy of colonial plunder on the grounds that colonial freedom means impoverishment at home.

The essence of the present policy of the reformist leaders was laid down in the Report of the General Council to the Swansea Trades Union Congress in 1928. It is well worth recalling this significant statement:

> "Broadly speaking," declared the General Council, "there were three possible lines of policy open to the Trade Union Movement. The first was to say frankly, that the unions will do everything possible to bring the industrial machine to a standstill, to ensure by all possible means the breakdown of the entire system, in the hope of creating a revolutionary situation on the assumption that this might be turned to the advantage of the workers and to the abolition of capitalism. That policy the Trade Union Movement has decisively rejected as futile, certain to fail, and sure to lead to bloodshed and misery.
>
> "The second course was one of standing aside and telling employers to get on with their own job, while the unions would pursue the policy of fighting sectionally for improvements. The objections to this course are that it is entirely inconsistent with the modern demand for a completely altered status of the workers in industry, and that it is a futile

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy, a confession of failure, for unions to say they are going to take no hand in the momentous changes that are taking place in the economic life of the nation.

"The third course is for the Trade Union Movement to say boldly that not only is it concerned with the prosperity of industry, but that it is going to have a voice as to the way industry is carried on, so that it can influence the new developments that are taking place. The ultimate policy of the movement can find more use for an efficient industry than for a derelict one, and the unions can use their power to promote and guide the scientific reorganisation of industry as well as to obtain material advantages from that reorganisation."

The Trades Union Congress decided in favour of the third course, because it afforded "the best hope of raising the status, security and standards of living of the workers whom the Council represents."

A completely bankrupt policy which has landed the working class in its present terrible position! The answer to the third course is the sorry story of reduced wages, speed-up, worsened conditions, spreadover on hours and mass unemployment. If ever the bureaucracy had an opportunity of demonstrating their policy, it has been during these two years of a Labour Government. They have certainly played their part in influencing "new developments" and in guiding "scientific reorganisation." But the material advantages have accrued only to the capitalists and reorganisation has helped industry towards collapse not efficiency. This is what the revolutionaries said from the very outset when the fight against Mondism first began.

The policy adopted at the Swansea Trades Union Congress was the policy of saving capitalism at the expense of the working class. Events have proved that the posing of the problem as one of restoring capitalist prosperity is a negation of the aspiration to raise the standards of the workers. This the trade union leaders knew then as they know it to-day, even though they still resort to the same arguments as Citrine did in the *Daily Herald* of May 13, when he stated that his policy for meeting the present wage offensive was for the trade unions to demand "a share in the shaping of economic policy."

The first course—the revolutionary struggle against capitalism—which the bureaucrats so contemptuously rejected, is the only possible policy before the working class. (It is hardly necessary to add that the policy of revolutionary struggle is presented in a deliberately distorted form by the General Council.) The first course really means the working out of the tactics of the class struggle from the standpoint that the vital question of to-day is the question of ownership, the building of the workers united front on the basis of a programme of immediate fighting demands, and through resistance to the demands of the capitalists and by organised counter-offensive to strengthen the working class and forge the new revolutionary leadership in preparation for the decisive struggle to overthrow capitalism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INDIAN MILL-OWNERS CRY HALT!

By BERNARD HOUGHTON

[*We are glad to print the following article as representing an independent view of the Indian situation by a writer whose work is already familiar to* LABOUR MONTHLY *readers and who is himself an ex-Indian Civil Servant of long standing.*—ED.]

THE blunder of the Simon Commission convinced the Indian bourgeoisie that paper resolutions in the Congress and speeches in the Councils were not enough, that if they were not under a new constitution to be shut out from power as at present, action was necessary. Lord Birkenhead, it was clear, intended to ride rough-shod not only over the masses of Indians, but over their heads also. Accordingly the Lahore Congress, rising to a high pitch of enthusiasm, endorsed previous resolutions for independence and—this is vital—gave to the Working Committee a mandate to initiate Civil Disobedience. The leadership was again entrusted to Mr. Gandhi, who had returned to politics, regardless of the fact that in 1922 he had brought a similar movement to an ignominious end. Somewhat tardily he selected the salt monopoly as the field for Civil Disobedience

This monopoly, with its concomitant tax, whilst severely felt by the poverty-stricken masses, does not touch the interests of the Indian Capitalists or landlords. In April, Mr. Gandhi made his famous march to the sea at Dandi, denouncing *en route* the Government in terms which left nothing to be desired in force or pungency. On making salt he was arrested, not under the Salt Act, which only provides short terms of imprisonment, but under a *lettre de cachet*. Already there had been outbreaks from the impatient masses, but thenceforward all India became insurgent; it was as though one had applied a match to a powder-magazine.

It was no longer a matter of local rebellion but of a whole nation ranged against its exploiters. Such rebellions there were in several places, especially at Peshawar, Chittagong and Sholapur. The two latter were repressed with ease, the former, which occurred before Mr. Gandhi's arrest, with some difficulty. Another and independent rising in Burma has, in spite of heavy losses, lasted for months, the rebels taking shelter in the great forests. But, as a whole, the movement confined itself to the non-violent lines prescribed, indeed, for an almost disarmed nation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

confronted with an army equipped with modern weapons. Imperialism retorted to the movement in characteristic fashion. Open dictatorship, that is, government by ordinance replaced the ordinary law; the Press was muzzled more tightly than ever; imprisonments (to the number of 60,000) batonings and brutalities innumerable became the order of the day.

The plan of the Labour Government, confronted with the failure of the Simon Conference, had been simple. It was to call a Conference in London with leading Indians, and in the meantime to keep the country quiet with a vague promise of Dominion Status. The latter proved a damp squib—Indians had been deceived too often. The Conference, though the alarmed Viceroy pressed for an earlier date, took place in November. Its members, with expenses paid on a lavish scale, consisted partly of a number of Indian Princes and partly of various landlords, big capitalists and others nominated by Simla and by the various local Governments, carefully selected so as to accentuate sectarian divisions. The Nationalist leaders refused to attend, probably because the bourgeoisie as a whole considered that an intransigent attitude might gain better terms. Besides, the popular movement was then far too strong to permit of a halt.

Since the Congress with the mass of Indians stood aloof, the Conference could only be a preliminary one, but it served to outline the imperialist plan. This consists of three parts, (1) the so-called Federation of India, with a large number of Princes in both Chambers at Delhi; (2) nominal provincial autonomy and nominal responsibility at Delhi; (3) Safeguards.

Federation the scheme is not. It merely dilutes both houses with 25 or 33 per cent. of born reactionaries, bound by the strongest of ties, self-interest, to the maintenance of British rule, and thus seeks to paralyse these bodies as agents of the popular will. Imperialism, which in Europe seeks the friendship of a Mussolini, a Pilsudski or a Horthy, in India clasps to itself these survivals from a world that is dead. Already the bureaucracy are looking on these Princes, the last allies of Imperialism on Indian soil, in the light of a body-guard for themselves. The Princes for their part have made it clear that they will stand or fall with Britain. which objectively is true enough. Patiala has added that they will sacrifice everything, if need be, for the maintenance of the imperial connection. As for their own subjects, they declare, almost in Lord Curzon's words, that they will be the sole judges of any change.

Provincial autonomy and responsibility at the centre are made dead letters by the provision of safeguards, of which indeed the Princes are the first. With the army as now under the Viceroy, with some four-fifths of the revenue at his disposal, with dictatorial powers in reserve and other provisions, the self-government of India is reduced to a farce.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The method followed has been that of the Montagu Reforms, to take away with your left hand what you give with your right. The fact that the army remains under the Viceroy alone suffices to nullify the whole constitution, as the example of Egypt proves.

Not a very inviting prospect, it may be thought, to hold out to the Indian bourgeoisie and its organ the Congress, even though garnished with many unctuous phrases. The gulf between such a Constitution and Dominion Status, not to say Independence was so deep that by no dint of sophistry or special pleading could any sort of connexion be established. However, the Imperialists determined to essay it, adding as an inducement that the venue of further conversations would be in India.

To understand what follows, glance for a moment at the problem of the Indian bourgeoisie. A rising capitalist class in order to gain power must first conquer the ruling class of landlords or, as in India, of foreigners. This aim being unattainable of its own strength, it must perforce call in the help of the mass of the people, the workers and peasants, using for this purpose slogans which appeal to all. A place in the sun once achieved it becomes of course necessary to damp down the popular movement lest haply it become overstrong and power pass to the people. Such was the strategy of the British bourgeoisie after the bloodless revolution of 1832, such that of the German bourgeoisie after that of 1918. This, then, is the problem of the Indian capitalists, led, like those in Britain a century ago, by the textile millowners. They aim to secure a Government under their control as far as their own interests are concerned, through which they can shut out their rivals in Lancashire and Japan and enforce their own fiscal policy. Recognising the British State machine and army as efficient instruments for holding the masses in subjection, they are willing to tolerate them, lest worse befall, provided only that they have control of the customs and other matters affecting their interests.

Mr. Gandhi, on release from prison for the purpose of negotiations, affected at first hostility to the imperialist scheme, though he was careful to leave the door open. Followed a conference with the millowners and with those imperialist agents, Sir T. Sapru and Messrs. Jayakar and Shastri. Behold him, then, at Delhi with the Working Committee, engaged in conversations with Viceroy, and surrounded by a select coterie of mill-owners, including Mr. Birla. Some sharp bargaining ensued, for the Imperialists (through Lord Irwin), were in no mood to sacrifice Lancashire, whose exports are now a fourth of pre-war, even at the price of an India undone. In the end, however, a settlement was reached in which, apart from a petty concession in salt-making to save Mr. Gandhi's face, they gained a complete victory, save only that the boycott (with picketting) of foreign cloth remained. Further discussion

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was restricted within the limits of the London scheme. Mr. Gandhi had committed perhaps the most amazing *volte face* in history.

The Imperialists were astonished at their own success, but they took care to bridle their tongues and to restrain their jubilation. They were not yet out of the wood. It was essential to preserve Mr. Gandhi's prestige in order that he might carry with him the Karachi Congress, a seemingly impossible proposition. Again the unexpected happened. The Congress not only confirmed the capitulation of Delhi—to call it by its true name—but appointed Mr. Gandhi plenipotentiary to deal with the British Government. Apart from a timely demonstration by the Youth League, the only really hostile notes were struck by a few speakers like Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, although, as the latter remarked, if any other person but Mr. Gandhi had brought up this settlement, he would have been thrown into the sea.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who uttered such valiant cries at Lahore and after, proved, in Bismarck's phrase, " a lath painted to look like iron." Mr. S. C. Bose spoke boldly, but in the end on that fatuous plea—unity of the Congress—withdrew his opposition. The collapse was complete.

What were the reasons for this landslide ? All agree that it was largely due to the personal sway—call it hypnotism or what you will—of Mr. Gandhi. In fairness to him it must be remembered that it was he who first appealed to the masses of India, summoning them to a crusade for freedom against their foreign masters. His words have gone from end to end of the land, castigating the Government as with whips. If on a former occasion he led the people to attack, only to fail them ere the attack began, the stream of his seductive though illusory oratory has never wholly ceased, an oratory of which the religious note makes a peculiar appeal to Indians. India is the land of religions, perhaps the last refuge of religions—hence Mr. Gandhi's title of Mahatma. Moreover had he not but yesterday as the plenipotentiary of India spoken with the Viceroy face to face, in secret conclave ? Personally he is without fear. Nor has any man during the period of his life won the willing obedience of so many millions.

Mr. Gandhi apart, it is not to be supposed that the capitalist wire-pullers, so successful at Delhi, ceased their activities at Karachi. That, too, would account for much, the Congress being an essentially bourgeois organisation. But a decisive factor arose from the tactics of Mr. Gandhi and the Working Committee in meeting the Congress with a *fait accompli*. It was a question of throwing him overboard or of submitting to his lead. Faced with this alternative, all but a tiny minority yielded up their convictions, chose the less honourable way.

In this matter there is no question as to the power behind the throne ; it is the textile millowners. Always their friend, Mr. Gandhi has now come

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out into the open as their champion, not only against Britain but against India. That is to say, he has turned his back on independence and on nearly every claim put forward by Congress in order that the millowners may attain their goal. His campaign for home-spun was, in spite of clever rationalising, inspired in their interests and was subsidised by them. He only with reluctance acceded to the demand for independence which was against their interests. (To cover his retreat from this demand, he has recently indulged in word-spinning on the meaning of Purna Swaraj, exactly as the late C. R. Das did on the meaning of Swaraj.)

As already noted, on his release he conferred with the millowners and was accompanied by a millowners' deputation to Delhi. It was on a question of the boycott of foreign cloth that the conference nearly broke down, this concession, with a negligible one in salt-making, being the sole salvage from Mr. Gandhi's boasted eleven demands. Amidst the confusion and dismay which followed the Delhi capitulation, the Ahmedabad millowners welcomed Mr. Gandhi with open arms. Later on, the latter has complained that the British Government does not appreciate the benefit conferred by the lifting of the boycott on all goods *except textiles*. Finally, Mr. Gandhi will come to London accompanied not by the Working Committee but by Mr. Birla and two or three other Indian capitalists, nominated by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

Before he comes he promised to arrange the religious difficulty.

It goes without saying that the Round-Table Conference endorsed the plan of a communal (properly sectarian) electorate, by which the Imperialists hope to divide the National movement and to rule India. Actually, only a section of the Moslems headed by Shaukat Ali clamour for a separate electorate; others, perhaps a majority, including many prominent leaders and the Yamiat-ul-Uluma reject this monstrosity, which in practice would recoil on their own heads. Naturally it is the first party to which the Imperialists and their Press give ear. With these people Mr. Gandhi has done his best to come to terms but he has failed. His sincerity is beyond question. But religious himself, he has made the mistake of appealing to these fanatics on religious or ethical grounds.

The true reply to this imperialist manœuvre is that the problems of Government are economic problems, with which religion has no more to do than with the phases of the moon. In politics the question is, not whether a man is a Hindu or a Moslem, but whether he is a landlord or a tenant, a capitalist or a worker, a shopkeeper or a peasant. True, religion looms large in India as in all countries with an old agricultural civilisation. Two Japanese statesmen who visited the country early in this century opined, indeed, that India would never become great because she had too much religion. But had the British Government not thwarted the industrialising of India and smothered as far as possible all political

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life, India's religion would long ere this have receded into the background. The manifold problems to which machine industry and modern chemistry give rise would have eclipsed in interest the sayings of the Rishis and the writings of the Koran. Machines have no religion. The world which they create and on which we are now entering will be without dogma.

The proper retort of Indians to the Imperialists on this issue should be in this wise : " You are talking to us in a language we do not understand. Released from the trammels you have in your own interests imposed on her, India will march forward and she will look forward. Land tenure, the rights of the workers, the organisation of industry, hydro-electric stations, education, improved agriculture and a dozen similar matters will alone occupy her mind. She will discard religious feuds as one discards an old coat, as they have been discarded in Europe, in Turkey, in Persia, in every civilised country except our India, for a century under your feet."

What of the future ? The Cabinet, it is clear, is playing for time. No date has been fixed for another London Conference ; even the programme of the Federation Committee is wrapped in haze ; a Conservative M.P. even stated that it might be a year or two before the Constitution was settled. By procrastination the Imperialists hope to wear down the more militant Indians, trusting the movement will peter out, as in 1922. When the Conference does re-assemble, nothing can be more certain than the fate which awaits Mr. Gandhi and his capitalist bodyguard. Mr. Baldwin and Lord Peel for the Conservatives, Lord Reading for the Liberals have reiterated that Federation and the Safeguards are integral parts of the Scheme ; Labour, though more nebulous, says the same thing. " No Conference should be held with Mr. Gandhi," said Mr. Churchill for the Die-Hards, " unless and until he has accepted all the safeguards and conditions which were prescribed in the Round-Table Conference." Some minor concessions there may be to preserve Mr. Gandhi's prestige, but even these the House of Lords may subsequently annul.

The real issue lies, however, in India. There will be no reaction such as followed Bardoli. The economic conditions are far worse and the events of 1930 have cut too deep. All India has been ranged into line against the Government, has come to recognise the Government as the enemy in the path. Though Mr. Gandhi and the Congress have failed the masses, the ideas that they have preached remain and those ideas spell Revolution. Already it is becoming evident, from Bardoli in the West to Chittagong in the East, that the movement is not to be obeyed at a word from Mr. Gandhi, who, sophist as he is, finds it " uphill work " to put the pact over on to the masses. His chief subterfuge is to use the word " independence " in two quite different senses, the independence of individuals and that of nations. Occasionally he

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oversteps the boundary into falsehood, as when he told certain Red Shirts that they would find a workers' and peasants' republic in Bihar.

Lord Irwin telegraphed before leaving: "We can only hope for the best," thus betraying his own pessimism; the Governor of the Punjab has begun to use threats. One thing stands out crystal clear. In vain do the bourgeoisie and landlords call a halt—India has gone too far not to go farther.

Though unconnected with the Congress manœuvres, the case of Burma demands notice here. That country, as is well known, is separated from India not only geographically, but in race, language and religion. The Burmese have been called the Irish of the East. There are no great Burmese landlords and the capitalists are mostly British or Indian. Indian also are the mill-hands and dockers and many shop-keepers and moneylenders. For some time past Indian immigrants have been supplanting the Burmese peasantry in the delta districts, particularly in the neighbourhood of Rangoon.

The tolerant Buddhist religion making fanaticism impossible, it was this racial—really economic—friction that the imperialists have seized upon as a basis on which to divide and rule.

The second and major part of their plan is to separate Burma from India. Ever since the Congress movement began to challenge British rule in India, the officials and the British mercantile community have favoured separation. The advantages to the former are obvious; the latter also fervently desire separation, for then, whatever happens in India, they will still have a Government which they can control. The most powerful interests are the rice-millers and oil—especially oil. After the advent of the present Governor this movement took a sharper turn. Sir C. Innes literally stumped the country making speeches in favour of separation, fomenting animosity against India, and holding out the bait of Dominion Status.

Even so, the Burmese were not deceived, for they understood that separation meant relegation to the position of Malaya, imprisonment without hope of release. The General Council of Burmese Associations (G.C.B.A.) answering to the Indian National Congress, with 99 per cent. of the people, has always opposed it. The Simon Commission was boycotted in Burma as in India, and the evidence taken by it on this matter is therefore valueless.

With the Round-Table Conference Sir C. Innes saw his opportunity. Without even consulting Simla he nominated as delegates a European agitator for separation and three puppets who no more represented Burmese opinion than his private secretary. Not content with this he took "sick" leave to England and in London pulled the strings from

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

behind the scenes. The Labour Ministers in this as in most other matters, proved themselves the easy tools of the permanent officials, though even MacDonald at one time had his doubts. Needless to say that the decision for separation has been accompanied by no promise of Dominion Status.

Opinion in Burma is thoroughly aroused to the danger which menaces the country, and they will make their will known in no uncertain way. Meanwhile, Government by ordinance continues, and their eminent leader, U. Ottama, has been refused a passport to come to London. The rebellion, however, which in spite of heavy losses, still smoulders, is unconnected with this issue nor is it, as the officials allege, in line with similar revolts in past history. Commencing in the Tharawady district, it has extended to the Insein, Henzada, Thayetmyo and Prome districts, thus proving that it is no ordinary outbreak. It springs partly from the distress of the peasantry owing to the slump in the price of rice, a distress intensified by the operations of the Bullinger rice pool. The Capitation or poll tax levied in November, an impost peculiar to Burma, must for this reason have become doubly burdensome. Partly it is a reflex from the challenge to British rule in India, for now as always every true Burman hopes to see his country, " independent as in the days of yore." The number of insurgents killed has reached the astonishing figure of one thousand ; mass trials are taking place of hundreds at a time, thus rendering any attempt at justice impossible ; as many as fifteen have been executed in one batch. The insurgents it must be remembered possess only a few guns, being armed for the most part with daks. (A dak may be anything from a sword to a chopper.) From camps in the forests they wager guerilla warfare, assisted by the sympathy of the countryside. That in spite of this unheard-of severity, the rising is still unquelled evidences an intensity of feeling, a doggedness and resolution which bode ill for British rule, separation or no separation. This revolt the government will suppress, but they will not conquer the Burmese will for freedom, the will to struggle and to suffer until they stand erect, " a nation once again."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RECENT EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA

By DAN RICHARDS

The Deepening of the Economic Crisis

AUSTRALIA, the model land of reformism, staggers under the blows of the world economic crisis. Within the capitalist parties, from the Scullin Labour Party to the new Lyons and Latham Nationalist bloc to the Lang-Garden group of left bluffers in New South Wales, there is the greatest anxiety respecting the future of Australian capitalism.

What have been the chief factors in the sharpening of the economic crisis in Australia in recent months? First and foremost the Australian politicians have been following with anxiety the course of Australian stocks on the London money market. Already in January, Commonwealth 5 per cent. stock had fallen from 95½ per cent. (January, 1930) to 70 per cent. (January, 1931). The same trend was shown in all other leading Australian stocks. Since January, the downward movement has been continued. Meanwhile, the Australian manufacturers and particularly exporters of primary commodities have been hit by the fall in the value of the Australian pound sterling.

In January of this year, the Australian pound had fallen at least by 10 per cent. (therefore £110 Australian was equal to only £100 sterling on London). Since January, the movement of depreciation of the pound has continued until now £130 Australian equal £100 English. The interest on Australian overseas debt is paid in sterling or British pounds, and any depreciation of the Australian pound obviously makes payment of interest on overseas debt a heavier burden on the Australian workers and farmers who have to bear the burden.

Again, the severity of the fall in raw material prices, particularly wool and wheat, has brought ruin and destitution to thousands of farmers and raw material producers.

In a survey of the Australian situation made by the British Trade Commissioner Dalton, it is pointed out that the fall in wool prices has meant a definite loss of 3s. per sheep. The return on wheat is about 17s. per acre to the grower, whereas the costs of production are not less than 28s. per acre, and it is emphasised that before Australian wheat can become competitive it must reduce its costs by 30 per cent.

The drying up of overseas loans plus the low price for Australian exports, plus the 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. or even more depreciation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the value of the Australian £, plus a deficit for the nine months ending October, 1930, of over £19,000,000 indicates the character of the difficulties facing the bourgeois politicians, and it is at the same time an indication of what further economies will have to be made at the expense of the working class in order to balance the budget.

Some idea of the present situation in Australia is provided by the following abbreviated appeal from 600 British emigrants which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, March 27, 1931 :

1. The first and only concern of this document is to show that through forces, economic or other, we are deprived of rights of citizenship as subjects of the Crown. Work is impossible to obtain. Refusal to submit and come to this camp renders one liable to a police charge of vagrancy. The alternative is starvation.
2. The outstanding feature of Blackboy Camp is that the majority (80 per cent. to 90 per cent.) are from the Old Country, many ex-soldiers and sailors who gave service in the War, and many recent arrivals misled into thinking that work would be readily found in Australia.
3. It would appear that our position is analogous to that of Indian coolies encouraged to migrate to other parts of the Empire, but whose Labour in course of time is unwanted owing to changed conditions. There is nothing ahead of us but a life of hopeless pauperism.
4. Therefore, bearing in mind that in Fiji in 1919 the Indian Government repatriated all Indian coolies (under indenture) from the sugar plantations of that country, we beg to suggest the following :

> All migrants who arrived in this State during the last three years (taking into consideration the fact that they were certainly encouraged to migrate) shall be repatriated to Britain at the earliest possible moment.
>
> (From " Repatriation Appeal of 600 British emigrants.")

What Happened After Otto Niemeyer's Visit

But there can be no doubt that the leading bourgeois Labour politicians, Scullin, Hill and Lang, have been making very real efforts to save the capitalist machine in Australia and to shift the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the working class. It is well-known that one of the basic features of the proposals submitted by the bailiff of finance capital—Otto Niemeyer—on his recent visit to Australia concerned " economies all round." If by " all round " is meant to embrace all sections of the working class then Scullin and his lieutenants have not been idle as the following remarks of Sir John Kerwan go to show :

> A considerable fall had taken place in wages. The 10 per cent. reduction ordered by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court came into effect on February 1. The Award applied to railway workers in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, clothing employees, A.W.U. members in the grazing industries (with the exception of shearers, whose wages were reduced by award last July from 40s. to 31s. 6d.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

per 100 in Western Australia and 40s. to 32s. 6d. in all other States) and employees in the timber industry. Since the Court gave its judgment 32 further applications had been made by employers for the 10 per cent. reduction, so it could be assumed that there would be further reductions in wages.

As a result of the fall in the cost of living, there was an automatic reduction on February 4 in the Federal basic wage, ranging from 3s. a week in Sydney to 5s. 6d. in Perth. This was in addition to the 10 per cent. above mentioned. The State basic wage had also been reduced in several States. The fall in the cost of living would mean a reduction of about £750,000 in the wages bill for the Federal Public Service. It was certain that these steps would be followed later by still further and more drastic economies.

(*Times*, April 23, 1931.)

It is the question of " further economies " mentioned by Sir John Kerwan that is the key to an understanding of the present political ferment and move towards Fascism in the camp of the Australian bourgeois political parties.

It will be remembered that the leaders of the " Economy " campaign in this country took inspiration from the above example of Labour rule when they stated :

To the argument that we are demanding the impossible, we reply that the recent action of the German and Australian Governments, faced with economic difficulties not unlike our own, in proposing cuts in public expenditure proves that Democratic and even Socialist Governments are capable in times of crisis of adopting the appropriate remedy, however unpalatable it may be to certain minorities . . . . .

(Viscount Grey of Fallodon and Walter Runciman. *Times*, January 26, 1931.)

Mr. Robert Gibson, Director of the Australian Commonwealth Bank, made it quite clear in a statement in the Senate a few weeks ago that the only alternative to further gold shipments from Australia was a still further intensification of the attack against the standard of life. When challenged for an alternative to default on the part of the Commonwealth Government, he replied that there was a third alternative, namely still further economies. The situation is one where the Scullin forces are more and more becoming unequal to carrying out quick enough the full Fascist programme of the Australian banks.

The Default Issue in New South Wales

The Lang default to overseas bondholders reported in March has been followed with great interest in this country, but on examination, however, the bluffing character of this so-called " drastic action " against the bondholders and banks becomes apparent. It is a well-known fact that the machinery of the Commonwealth Government is subordinate to the jurisdiction of the High Court which overrules individual States, and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

default on the part of any individual State must be borne by the Commonwealth Government for the entire country. Lang must have known this. Besides, the repudiation bluff of Lang was in no way a serious challenge to the foreign bondholders because Scullin had long ago, while on his visit to England, made it clear that the Commonwealth Government would meet the demands of overseas creditors and as is known, the default on the part of New South Wales was met in this way.

It now only remains for the Scullin Government to enforce its legal privileges to compel the New South Wales Government to refund the amount paid in respect of default to knock the bottom out of the bluff. Even the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out in an editorial on the Lang bluff that Mr. Lang would be surer of the success of a default policy after and not before the revolution. The following statement by the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* is therefore the best comment on the Lang bluff:

> He was to live up to his reputation as a revolutionary. But he should have remembered that, if revolution and debt are to be mixed up together, it is as well to have the revolution first and when that has succeeded then to talk of the debt.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian*, March 31, 1931.)

Again, before the election in November, Lang was denouncing the Melbourne agreement of the Federal Cabinet and State premiers which was drafted under the pressure of Sir Otto Niemeyer—the central point of which was to increase the pressure on the workers and poor farmers. On this policy Lang received thousands of workers' votes. Similarly, the trade union machinery was harnessed to the Lang campaign on the basis of a fight against wage cuts. In the election campaign, only the Australian Communist Party warned the workers of the meaningless and dangerous character of these left phrases. One of the first acts of the Lang Government was to reduce wages by imposing a tax of a shilling in the pound, which was equal to a wage cut of 5 per cent. It was clear that if Lang was to meet the budget deficits he would have to obtain not less than 300 per cent. more than the previous Bavin Nationalist Government was realising on a 3d. in the pound tax. So the "leftist" Lang applied a policy four times more oppressive for the workers than the Nationalists and increased the tax from 3d. to 1s. Thus, although opposing the policy known as Niemeyerism in words, Lang enforced the policy in deeds.

Lang has also attacked the conditions of blind workers in the various institutions and has driven the native Aborigines from their reservation in LaPerouse. Nor have the widows, the cripples and the sick been overlooked. And of course this same Lang has joined the anti-Soviet wheat-dumping crusaders.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Turning to Adelaide, we find that a regime of blood and bludgeoning is the order of the day under Labour Premier Hill. Early this year a determined fight was put up by the Australian unemployed against Labour police thugs. This is how the Australian *Workers' Weekly* describes the events of January :

> The police were lined up at the Treasury in preparation for a brutal attack and when they rushed at the workers they behaved like jungle beasts, clubbing all and sundry on the head, knocking one woman over and jumping on her. The newspapers stated that Hill watched the brutal police attack from the windows of the Treasury.
>
> If that is so, then he must have seen the police beat Comrade Dorrie Hockley, a woman member of the Communist Party, into insensibility, subsequently trampling on her and breaking her ribs.
>
> (*Workers' Weekly*, January 16, 1931.)

The Rising Wave of Radicalisation

It is clear even from the British Press comments that the resistance of the Australian workers is growing apace, and that despite strong traditions of " Labour Government," &c., the workers are breaking through the ranks of Social Fascism. Two recent statements in the London *Times* show the mood of the unemployed and employed in relation to the growing attack upon their standard of life. The following account relates to the unemployed demonstration early in January at Adelaide :

> Many of the unemployed sought to intimidate the Trades and Labour Council delegates who were holding a meeting. They surrounded the Trades Hall, and kept the delegates there all night long, only releasing them at 5.30 a.m. yesterday. The unemployed demanded that the Council should declare a General Strike in consequence of the official attitude towards the riots, and when the Council refused, the crowds besieged the building for over nine hours. All the Council agreed to was to discuss the liberation of the arrested men with the Government which, however, is resolutely hostile to any clemency.
>
> Some placards carried in Friday's procession read " Hands off India " and " No War with Russia."
>
> (*Times*, January 12, 1931.)

Towards the end of January, the Commonwealth Arbitration Board had made its decision respecting a 10 per cent. wage cut. This is how the Award was received :

> There were unseemly scenes after the judges withdrew. A group of men at a table which had been occupied by a representative of the Trade Unions during the prolonged hearing of the case sang the " Red Flag " ; there was a general babble and cries of " Thieves " were heard. Mr. Crofts, Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and a leading advocate on behalf of the Union, called for three cheers for the " Social Revolution," and cheers were given. There was also a cry of " To hell with these judges," after the reading of the order of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the Court. For a time it appeared as if conflict between the employers and trade unionists would ensue, but peace was eventually restored.
>
> (*Times*, January 23, 1931.)

Although the above accounts are a good index of the mood of the Australian workers it would be wrong to imagine that this militancy is shared by the Trade Union officials. These have again and again in recent months, particularly the "left" leaders of N.S.W., betrayed the workers, and have actually led the attack on the workers. The same issue of the *Times* which reported the Arbitration Award decision was able to state concerning the leaders that :

> So far as indications show the reductions will be accepted without resort to violent protests. The leaders profess surprise, but it is significant that they confine criticism to the fact that the 10 per cent. reduction coincides with the cost of living adjustment, which involves a probable further loss of 4s. per week.

It is now also an open secret that the Australian Union leaders were parties to a secret conference with Otto Niemeyer at Melbourne when wage cuts were discussed.

The hatred of the Communists by the Labour politicians and trade union bureaucracy knows no bounds. The Communists are singled out for special attention in the arrests and police bludgeonings of the Labour Governments in all States. The reason and cause of this becomes clearer and clearer to ever larger masses of workers who are rallying to the revolutionary programme of the Australian Communist Party.

The agrarian and industrial crisis which is now raining heavy blows on the structure of Australian capitalism, the exposure of the real role of Scullin ; and the "lefts" in N.S.W. as wage cutters and tools of imperialist bondholders, and the new drive towards Fascism under the leadership of the Lyons group provides the Australian Communist Party with excellent circumstances for organising the masses for launching a counter-offensive and for preparation for a final struggle with Australian capitalism and its agents.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ATTACK ON THE ENGINEERS

By EDMUND FROW

" *British Engineering is in a very grave position. The sale of its products is declining and with increasing rapidity. Unemployment is high and is still mounting. For lack of employment, skilled men are leaving the industry.*" —REALITIES AND PROBLEMS, published by the Engineering Employers' Federation.

THE Engineering Employers' Federation open their case for an attack on wages and hours with the above statement. While they openly admit the crisis the industry is in, the Trade Union officials in their " reply," took great pains to minimise the depth of the crisis, and to show that it is part of the World Economic Crisis.

But the fact of 247,948 or 24.4 per cent. registered unemployed cannot be denied by anyone.

This decline of the industry has not been arrested but, on the contrary, has been accentuated by the changes carried through by the employers in recent years. More and more powerful combines dominate the industry, such as the Associated Electrical Industries Ltd., the British Steel Corporation, &c., which are in a much better condition to carry through rationalisation, by reorganising the shops on " scientific lines " with a speeding up of the workers consequent on such reorganisation, by concentrating and transferring certain work to particular factories in the combine, and by the introduction of new and up-to-date machinery. By this means thousands of workers are displaced, while those remaining at work are driven much more intensively.

In all the workshops, particularly in the big factories on mass production, there has been this fierce and intensified rationalisation drive. The introduction into the industry of new and specialised machine tools merits special attention. Instances of such machines are Churchill's Centreless Grinding machine, the Richard's Twin Borer, Richard's P.R.'s, Kearns' " Do-All ," Asquith's Drilling machines (one type has three tables), and the Ward Combination Lathe.

The development of the scientific machine tool, mass production, standardisation and simplification, use of jigs, gauges, and precision tools has led to great changes for the workers. The Report of the Balfour Committee showed a change of from 60 per cent. of the workers graded as skilled, 20 per cent. semi-skilled, and 20 per cent. unskilled

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in 1913, to 40 per cent. skilled, 45 per cent. semi-skilled, and 15 per cent. unskilled in 1926.

To-day, five years later, it is safe to say that a majority of the workers are graded as semi-skilled, and are indeed semi-paid.

The day of the old skilled craftsman has gone. Precision machines now do the work accurately, and have a much greater production capacity. Instead of fitters and turners, we have machine minders and assemblers or erectors as far as the mass of the workers are concerned. Speeding up, the conveyor system, constant cutting of piece prices are the order of the day.

Along with these developments, the employers have had a clear and well-defined policy in relation to the workers, which can be summarised as follows :

1. Introduction of a large number of apprentices and women workers into the industry at low rates of pay, over which the employers have maintained full control.
2. Refusal to recognise any definite rate on machine tools.
3. In the light of the experience of the old Shop Stewards' and Workshop Committee movement, the formation of " Welfare " Works Committees and the development of " welfare work " by the employers for the purpose of maintaining and strengthening their influence over the workers.
4. The closest collaboration with the Trade Union officials and the use of the York Memorandum (provisions for avoiding disputes) as a method of compulsory arbitration.

The Employers' Offensive

When it became clear to the employers that, despite the ruthless carrying through of this policy based on maintaining and increasing profits, the industry during 1930 was experiencing a sharp decline, their only solution was further attacks on the workers.

This passing over of the employers to a general offensive against the wages and conditions of the workers was made clear in November, 1930, with the publication of the report called *Realities and Problems* by the Engineering Employers' Federation. This was followed by the application to the Trade Unions for a joint Conference, which was held on January 30. At this Joint Conference, the Employers' proposals were put forward for a 48-hour week, attacking the overtime, night-shift, double-day shift and the piecework agreements, and also asking for the question of manning of machines and demarcation to be further discussed.

That the employers were determined on a most drastic and far-reaching attack was made clear, Sir Allan Smith stating before winding up :

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> If the present depression is prolonged or intensified we shall be compelled to ask you to confer with us on the general wages question. Further, the adjustment of the working conditions may of itself involve adjustments of wages or other methods of remuneration, and these will require to be dealt with in conjunction with the working conditions in question. (Proceedings at a Special Joint Conference held on January 30; page 34.)

Further, in concluding the threat was made:

> If, however, you and your members fail to make your contribution the employers will be left with no alternative but to take what steps they consider necessary." (Op. cit.; page 34.)

The Workers' Fighting Spirit

The policy of the employers of constantly attacking the workers led to numerous disputes in the factories. In an engineering centre like Manchester, disputes occurred during 1930 on such issues as manning of machines, introduction of "Widia" High-speed Steel, time-and-a-third for pieceworkers and on the question of working systematic overtime.

These issues raised by the militant workers and shop stewards were taken through the Trade Union machine, several militants and stewards being victimised. The case of the introduction of the Ward Combination Lathe is typical of what occurred in all these disputes. At the beginning of 1930, this lathe was introduced at Messrs. Ferguson Pailins, and claimed by the employers to be a capstan lathe, although with its independent slide rest it is clearly a turret lathe.

The local agreement in Manchester fixes the rate of Combination Lathe operators at £2 16s. od., but at Ferguson Pailins the rate paid was £2 8s. od. The claim was made for full district rates, and the matter referred to the machinery of the York Memorandum. The case was taken to Central Conference with the result that "the parties were unable to arrive at a mutual recommendation."

This is but one issue that glaringly reveals how by the "provisions for avoiding disputes" this machinery of compulsory arbitration functions to stifle action on the part of the workers, and enables the bosses to successfully carry through their attack.

To-day, youths man the Ward lathe at Ferguson Pailins for 32s. per week. The Hartlepool District Committee took the same case through to Central Conference towards the end of 1930, claiming the full district rate. No wonder there was "failure to agree" when 32s. is paid in Manchester.

The attitude of the Trade Union officials was made clear not only by their slavish adherence to the York Memorandum, but also by their attitude at the National Committee meeting of the A.E.U. When the machine question was discussed, an amendment moved by the members

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Minority Movement which instructed the Executive Council to claim the full district rate for all adult labour employed on machines was carried by 33 votes to 17. Brownlie and Co. then got busy, and the next day this decision was rescinded by 44 votes to 8.

The lessons of these disputes have not been lost on the workers. More and more the engineers realise the need for action in place of long drawn out negotiations.

The employers' attacks on the workers have continued while national negotiations have taken place. The attempts to transfer shops from a system of payment by result on to plain time working, to reduce wages while maintaining the same intensive rate of work, also the reduction of the wages of apprentices in the federated shops in the Manchester district are significant in relation to the general attack. On these issues the militancy and fighting spirit of the workers was demonstrated; lack of organisation and leadership was the main weakness.

The disputes taking place in the workshops, and the feeling exhibited at the mass meetings held all over the country, make it clear that the engineering workers, radicalised by the constant struggles in the workshop over wages and working conditions, are in a fighting mood, willing and prepared to struggle.

The Policy of the Trade Union Leaders

In sharp contrast to the growing militancy of the workers stands the treacherous policy on the part of the Trade Union bureaucracy of systematically sidetracking and betraying the workers' interests. The negotiations between the Engineering Employers' Federation and the Trade Union leaders first for the £1, and then for the 10s., and finally for an 8s. wage advance, conducted over a number of years, served the employers' purpose of holding up any action by the workers while they continued to reduce real wages by the rationalisation drive in the shops.

The Trade Union machine is held by people who "settle disputes," not win them. The York Memorandum and such like machinery aids the employers in their attack, and the Trade Unions have become part of that machinery which aids the employers in attacking the workers.

The rôle of the Trade Union officials has been seen clearly in connection with the employers' big attack this year when they have worked to prepare the engineering workers to accept the employers' terms.

Following the Joint Conference held on January 30th, when the employers' proposals were put forward, and the reply of the Unions made on March 11th, the Union leaders set up a committee to meet the employers to "explore" their proposals. On April 14th, this committee reported back to a meeting of representatives of the Executive of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unions concerned, and this committee was empowered to negotiate with the employers.

The plea put forward was that they must see " How far the employers are disposed to give and take—for there would have to be giving as well as taking." (*Daily Herald*, April 15.)

But obviously any negotiations on the basis of the employers' proposals means taking from the workers to *give* to the employers ; this the negotiations soon made clear. It is interesting to note that the large unions with their more developed bureaucracy played the most reactionary role in all the joint meetings of the representatives of the Unions. On this occasion, a proposal put forward by the smaller unions to submit the question of whether negotiations be continued or no to a ballot vote of the membership was turned down by these reactionaries.

The result of these negotiations was made known on April 23, when the Trade Union officials reported that the employers had come forward with " modified demands," while they on their part had submitted proposals " made without prejudice " which are calculated to worsen the conditions of the engineers.

The " modified proposals " made by the Employers were : (1) Hours : to advise the abandonment of the claim to increase the working week from 47 to 48 hours ; (2) Overtime : time-and-a-quarter for the first three hours, thereafter time-and-a-half. Each day to stand by itself as now ; (3) Night-shift : the normal week to be 52 hours and the hourly rate to be one and one-sixth the day rate, overtime at time-and-a-third.

The trade union representatives' proposals were that overtime should be at time-and-a-third up to 12 o'clock and thereafter at time-and-two-thirds, and the night-shift should remain at 47 hours and be paid for at one and-one-quarter the day rate.

The union negotiators expressed themselves as prepared to consider the demand for prices on payment by result to be fixed to yield 25 per cent. instead of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. as at present, while " differences " remained over the question of terms for the two and three shift system.

It must not be taken that the reduction in the piece price rate is a simple question of 25 per cent. from $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., equal to an $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. reduction. This proposal, which, as was afterwards made clear, the negotiating committee had definitely offered to accept, would mean that the employers would have an opportunity of completely revising all piece prices or of introducing a new system of payment by results.

Already we have had indications of the employers in certain factories attempting to revert from systems of payment by result on to day-work, while maintaining the same intensive rate of work and so getting across a wage reduction.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Despite all this manœuvring on the part of the Employers and Trade Union leaders in their efforts to avoid a struggle and to force the workers to accept worsened conditions, under the mass pressure of the workers on May 7, the Conference of Executive representatives, armed with the authority of their executives passed a resolution stating that the terms contained in the employers' proposals do not contain a reasonable basis for discussion.

> We, therefore, have no alternative but to inform the employers that we cannot authorise any further negotiations on these terms.

The last clause in this resolution was opposed by one of the big Unions, who pressed for negotiations to be continued " in order to obtain other proposals from the Employers." Here again we see the bureaucracy fighting strenuously to avoid a struggle.

The militancy of the workers has, however, forced the Union officials to head a struggle in order to be better able to behead it, and the important weapon of Government arbitration is ready to be used, as was indicated recently when it was stated :

> Should a deadlock occur, the Ministry of Labour will, no doubt, be called in. (*Daily Herald*, May 8.)

Yes. The yellow *Daily Herald* is correct. No doubt the Labour Government will intervene in an attempt to lower the wages and working conditions of the workers. While the Labour Government were successful with the arbitration courts in lowering the standards of the Textile workers in the cotton struggle in 1929, and the woollen workers in 1930, these lessons were not lost to the workers in general. During the recent fight against the 8-loom system, the Lancashire Cotton Weavers showed that they had lost much of their illusions in this connection, and using the concrete experience of the workers in arbitration courts and awards, we must at this stage intensify our propaganda against the intervention of the Labour Government, exposing its anti-working class role, and fight against the idea of arbitration.

Also, we have the task of fighting the defeatist propaganda conducted by the Trade Union officials and their attacks on the militant workers, which have proceeded side by side with their efforts to get an " amicable settlement."

Recently we had Mr. W. Hutchinson making the statement that :

> The workers had not got the power to do much, because the working classes were either too apathetic or indifferent or did not realise their responsibility. (Speech at Oldham, May 10, *Manchester Guardian*, May 11.)

This slanderous statement about the rank-and-file who have shown a splendid fighting spirit was followed by the call for 100 per cent. Trade Unionism which has been just recently the main cry of the Trade Union

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bureaucracy. This call is calculated to break the unity of the workers in the engineering factories, to get the unionist to fight the non-unionist and *vice versa*, instead of both unitedly fighting the employers and their lackeys, the Trade Union officials.

Many workers, realising the treachery and duplicity of the Trade Union leaders, have mistakenly dropped out of the trade unions in disgust. These workers are prepared to fight, but not under the corrupt Trade Union leadership.

The Metalworkers' Minority Movement in this situation has the task of rallying the workers for struggle under independent rank-and-file leadership on the basis of concretely applying the decisions of the Fourth and Fifth World Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions.

The strong craft traditions of the engineers has been rudely shaken in recent years and by persistent work in the Trade Unions the Minority Movement has won much support and also positions in the Trade Union apparatus.

But it is clear that now, when the Trade Union officials are definitely playing a strike-breaking rôle and are working to betray and sabotage the workers' struggle, the Minority Movement, while continuing and intensifying its Trade Union work, must win and establish a firm organisation in the factories.

The lack of factory papers in the engineering industry and also the reports in the press indicate that a strong tendency exists to neglect the drive to the factories and to confine work to the Trade Unions, where many comrades tend to play the part of left critics of the bureaucracy.

It is natural that in the engineering industry, where the militant workers, having developed work in such trade unions as the Amalgamated Engineering Union, with its traditions for democracy, regular Branch meetings, &c., that the weakness described as follows by the R.I.L.U. should exist:

> Above all Trade Union legalism, belief in constitutional methods, the long standing opposition and resistance to the line of independent leadership have not been broken down. (Open letter to the Charter Convention.)

A strong ideological fight must be conducted against these tendencies and the Communist Party and Minority Movement units mobilised in the engineering centres to utilise all forces and contacts to drive to the factories. For, along with the development of the employers' big attack, the workers in the factories are feeling the effects day by day of the intensive rationalisation drive and the situation is ripe for the establishment of independent organs of struggle.

Along with this drive to the factories our work in the Trade Unions must be directed to win the workers for struggle behind our independent

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leadership and against the treacherous Trade Union bureaucracy. Along with resolutions passed in Trade Union branches demanding action against the employers' attack and putting forward our counter proposals (which will serve the purpose of still further exposing the treachery of the Union officials), must go the positive proposal calling on all members in the branch to work for the setting up of independent organs of struggle, embracing all workers organised and unorganised, which can alone rally and organise the workers for a real fight.

The present situation has features in common with the situation during the war years. At that time the Trade Union leaders did nothing to fight for or protect the engineers, but entered into an agreement with the Government in order to chain the workers to the war machine.

During this period the rank-and-file workers showed a good understanding of what was required. Throughout the industry, the workers threw up a new unofficial rank-and-file organisation which led them in struggle—the Shop Stewards and Workshop Committee movement. This movement embraced all workers irrespective of grade or Trade Union on the basis of their mutual interests against the employers.

When the big slump came after the war, the employers, with the assistance of the Trade Union leaders, were successful in victimising many of the leaders of the Shop Stewards' movement, partly as a result of the unclarity of the militants as to the next steps to be taken in the changed situation that arose.

We must utilise the experiences and traditions of this movement—one of the finest in the history of the British working class for the setting up in the present situation of Independent Committees of Action, composed of both organised and unorganised workers.

Our activities must be concentrated on initiating such committees which will be able to lead the workers independently against the employers' attack and forward in struggle for their own fighting demands.

The approach must be made not with generalities, but by drawing together the most immediate and pressing grievances of the workers in the shop into a programme of demands, around which all workers can be rallied to set up united organs of struggle for a common fight.

With an extremely favourable objective situation, a body of workers militant and determined to fight, if the Minority Movement works correctly and energetically it will be able to lead the engineers following in the steps of the Lancashire Cotton workers to smash the employers' attack and gain a real working-class victory.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LABOUR IMPERIALISM AND EAST AFRICA

By G. PADMORE

[*The following is the concluding portion of the article the first part of which appeared in last month's issue.*]

Opposition of the Colonists

THE political dissatisfaction of the British colonists in East Africa is merely a reflection of their economic interests, which has its basis in the fact that the major industry of these whites is big-scale agriculture, the development of which depends upon cheap native labour.

As has already been pointed out, the Colonial Governments in this section of the Continent have always given direct assistance to the Europeans in procuring Negro labour for their farms and plantations through the enactment of some of the most repressive anti-labour legislation to be found in any part of the world. Nevertheless, these colonists have come to realise that the safest way to safeguard their economic interests which is coming more and more into conflict with that of British finance-capital on the one hand, and the agrarian interests in other sections of the world (Canada, Australia, Argentine, Brazil) on the other, is to get complete control over the political affairs of the amalgamated colonies, or at least to secure a majority of unofficial members on each of the local Legislative Councils. If this could be achieved, the colonists will be in a position to control political power and thereby wield a dominant power in questions affecting native policy, such as the administration of the Reserves, the framing of legislation and ordinances affecting labour " contracts," native taxation, the disbursement of finances for native education, public health, &c., &c.

With such power in their hands, the Africans would be even more brutally exploited than they are to-day, under more definite slave conditions without having to brook any interference on the part of the local representatives (Governors and Commissioners) of the Imperial Government.

The entire political outlook of these European landlords was glaringly expressed some years ago by one of their representatives in the Legislative Council of Kenya, who told his constituents during a campaign speech that

> *you will never solve the labour problem until you have control of the country. When you have that, you will immediately solve the problem.* (East African Standard, November 27, 1926.) (Emphasis mine—G.P.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There are additional reasons which give rise to the present agitation on the part of the colonists, as for example, indirect taxation and the Indian problem—(which is a demand on the part of the Asiatics for the establishment of a common electorial roll with the Europeans)—two phases of East Africa politics which space prevents us from discussing.

However, the Colonial Office, because of the economic interest of the Imperial bourgeoisie, will not be in the position to grant self-government to the settlers, and has openly indicated this by the terms laid down in the *White Paper* which deals with the methods to be adopted in bringing about closer union of the colonies. Notwithstanding the hypocritical phrases of Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the reason why the " Labour " Government will not grant political control to the settlers is because " paramountcy " of native interest must be maintained, the real economic and political reasons are obvious.

Furthermore, to make a concession of self-government to the colonists at this time would mean the further disintegration of the Empire and would weaken Britain's stronghold over Africa. The present position in which British finance-capital finds itself impels the imperialists more and more in the direction of greater political dominion over the African colonies. They are compelled to adjust their imperialistic policies according to their economic needs.

It is in this light that we must view the present situation in East Africa, and not be misled by any pseudo-humanitarian phrases of the Social-fascist minister, Lord Passfield, or his like, who talk glibly about His Majesty's Government's trusteeship of the natives, while at the same time they adopt the most terroristic methods of suppressing every manifestation of native political awakening. For instance, the *Kikuyu Central Association* has not only been suppressed, but the " Labour " Government through the enactment of recent legislation has made it a criminal offence for natives to collect money for purposes other than religious. The purpose of this is to prohibit the organisation of native political and trade union organisations. This is how MacDonald, the hangman of the Second International, aids in crushing the revolutionary struggles of the colonial toilers.

The whole scheme of amalgamation, therefore, is being put into effect by the " Labour " Government in the interests of their imperialist masters, who, finding themselves more and more within the throes of the world capitalist crisis, reserved the right to exploit East Africa more intensely than they have done in the past. They will do this by investing millions of pounds sterling in developing the mining resources (there are no mines at present) and railroad transportation, as well as building electric and power plants, docks, warehouses, &c., &c., by which means the British bankers and industrialists who control the basic industries of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

England will be able to find an outlet for their surplus finance-capital and a market for heavy commodities (steel, locomotives, cement and other building materials). A loan of £3 million has recently been floated in the London money market for railroad construction in Kenya.

Such a scheme of capitalist exploitation necessitates the creation of a " free " labour market so that the African natives will be able to sell their labour power to the capitalists. Here is just where the conflict over native policy arises, for in contradistinction to " free " labour, the landlords of Kenya would like to develop a slave system along the same lines which have already been instituted by the Anglo-Boers of South Africa. That is why there is such a close ideological kinship between these East African landlords and the South African nationalist party (who represent the agrarian class), which arises out of their common economic interests, that can be fittingly summed up in the simple words : "*free land and black labour.*" Because of this identity of interest, Hertzog, the leader of the South African Nationalists supports the East African landlords against British finance-capital.

German Imperialists Protest

The other direction from which protest comes against the proposed federation is from the German imperialists and their social fascist mercenaries. The new German imperialists and their social fascist hirelings have always entertained the hope of regaining " their " colonies, especially Tanganyika, the largest and most important of Germany's pre-war colonial possessions. During the 1930 elections, the fascists held a Congress at *Wartburg*, where plans were discussed for recovering the African colonies. The following resolution was adopted and despatched to Brüning, the German Chancellor, Dr. Curtis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the German Delegate to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations :

> German East Africa, is of all the German colonies, the most valuable. It is completely indispensable to the economic future of Germany. Former German Africans (whites—G.P.), united at Wartburg, ardently desire one day to return there. They look to the Government of the Reich to display the greatest energy in preventing the fusion of East Africa with the neighbouring British colonies, in guarding its character as a Mandated Territory and in bringing about its return to Germany.

Since then the German Association, an affiliated body of over a thousand Fascist and Social Fascist organisations, presided over by Dr. Heinrich Schnee, who was the last Governor of German East Africa and now a member of the Reichstag, issued the following manifesto under the title of " *Threatened Violation of German Rights,*" appealing to their followers to continue the struggle against Great Britain. The document reads :

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> By the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was robbed of her oversea possessions. The German colonies were placed under administration by Mandate, which by the Covenant of the League was to be carried out by a trusteeship by the Powers entrusted therewith. They must exercise this trusteeship as Mandatories of the League of Nations and in its name. The Mandate system is now most seriously threatened by the intention of the British Government to incorporate German East Africa in the British Empire. This, the largest and most valuable of the German colonies was handed over to England as a Mandated Territory. Recently the English Government in a "*White Paper*" put forward proposals which amount to the fusion of the East African Mandated Territory with the adjoining English colonies of Kenya and Uganda. A Committee of the English Parliament is to consider the matter. Furthermore, the White Paper has been communicated to the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva, so that that body may have an opportunity to consider and express an opinion upon it. The projected fusion of German East Africa with the neighbouring British Colonies is incompatible with the Covenant of the League. It would mean the first step in the illegal incorporation in the British Empire of German East Africa—a land twice as large as Germany and offering extraordinary favourable possibilities of development. The sharpest protests against this British action must be made by the German people, protests against the violation of Germany according to the Treaty of Versailles and of its rights as a member of the League of Nations, against the destruction of the Mandates system in regard to the largest Mandated Territory in Africa, against the illegal annexation in fact of German East Africa by England. The German people must combine in general defence of their rights and the idea of justice.

Even Rothermere, in order to gain the alliance of Hitler in drawing German fascism into an Anglo-German bloc against the Soviet Union and bolshevism, proposed that the clamourings of the new German imperialists be granted and Tanganyika returned to the Reich.

After his return to England from Germany in 1930, Rothermere wrote the following article which was syndicated throughout his chain of newspapers :

> Twelve months ago, I strongly urged upon the British Government to return to Germany all those African colonies. . . . I again emphasise the desirability of such a restitution. . . .to hand back to Germany some of her former African colonies would be a gesture of friendship which would cost Britain nothing.

However advantageous this gesture might appear to certain sections of the British bourgeoisie, we can rest assured that Germany's protest will fall upon deaf ears.

The resentment of the white settlers has been editorially expressed in the columns of *East Africa*, the official organ of the European planters, as follows :

> What can be said of so sweeping and indefensible a suggestion (Rothermere's) as that " to hand back Tanganyika Territory would be

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> a gesture of friendliness which would cost Britain nothing." It would cost us dear in every sense. *It would provide Germany with a submarine and air base in the Indian Ocean. It would cut the heart out of the British Eastern African Dominion now in the building. It would break the all-red route between Cairo and the Cape* which a few months hence is to be traversed weekly in each direction by an Imperial air mail service. *It would preclude the rational development of the British territories to the north and south by increasing the difficulties of administration and communication.* It would be a breach of faith with the British and foreign settlers, traders and investors who have established themselves in Tanganyika under the assurance that the territory shall remain under British administration. *It would anger, and not without reason, our Belgian allies, the development of whose vast resources in the Eastern Congo and Ruanda-Urandi is mainly dependent upon Tanganyika's central railway. It would force British and Belgian Africa to bear increased* expenditure on defence against possible German aggression. (Emphasis mine—G.P.)

The British imperialists, knowing the critical conditions in which they are in, are not in a position to grant this demand of the German nationalists. For, as we have already pointed out, the present imperialist policy of Great Britain is to consolidate her present economic position by means of tariffs, rationalisation on the workers in England through wage cuts, abolition of social insurance, unemployment; and at the same time intensifying the exploitation of the colonial masses.

The imperialist struggle over the East African colonies, however, affords us another glaring example of the sharp contradictions among the capitalist States; all of which are influencing international politics making for new imperialist wars and an attack upon the U.S.S.R.

Hypocrisy of the "Labour" Government

The "Labour" Government, bombarded from all quarters—inside and outside Parliament, by the colonial and certain sections of the English press, by the German imperialists, the colonists, the Indians and the natives—has attempted to find a temporary solution for the conflicting problems in East Africa by appointing a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament for the purpose of hearing evidence and discussing the *White Papers*. In this way the "socialists" hope to shift the responsibility for final settlement of the controversy upon the Committee. This action shows the hypocritical character of the MacDonald Government. At the time when the *White Papers* were first published, the Colonial Office stated that the Memorandum on Native Policy was the final statement of attitude of the "Labour" Government in respect to the natives, therefore the document would not be laid before the Joint Committee, whose only function would be to consider and recommend the methods to be adopted in bringing about constitutional changes, if any, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. But under pressure of certain representatives of British imperialism with agrarian interests

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in East Africa (the Earl of Plymouth), Lord Passfield has since decided to open the *White Paper on Native Policy* for discussion before the Joint Committee. This shows up the whole fraud of the " Labour " Government, which merely attempts to use the natives as political pawns.

The African World of December 13, 1930, commenting on this *volte face* of the Social Fascists, says :

> *Lord Passfield has been forced to bow before the storm. His statement that his memorandum on native policy will automatically come before the Committee is received with relief in Kenya, in view of Lord Passfield's frequent refusals to consider that course.*

This will enable the " Labour " Government to manœuvre and arrive at a compromise by making certain minor concessions to the colonists, especially on questions directly affecting their economic interests, such as guaranteeing an adequate supply of labour for the plantations. Such a concession would guarantee security for the planters and their children, a point which Sir Edward Grigg, the recently returned Governor of Kenya, in his evidence before the Joint Committee emphasised as the crux of Kenya politics.

> *The African World* goes on to remark that *it is now felt that there is a strong probability that the Joint Committee will be able to record the principle of " paramountcy of native interests " on which the memorandum was founded in such a way that it will be generally acceptable.* (Emphasis mine—G.P.)

Now what does this mean ? It means that the Joint Committee will be afforded the opportunity of relieving the tension and saving the face of the " Labour " Government by doing as follows : (1) Withdrawing all the safeguards which the *White Paper on Native Policy* originally purported to give the natives ; (2) abolishing the statement "paramountcy for native interests," originally used in the Duke of Devonshire's Memorandum issued in 1923 and repeated in the White Paper of the " Labour " Government ; and (3) denying the Indians the institution of a common electoral roll with the Europeans.

Assured of these concessions, the delegation of East African landlords, under the leadership of Lord Delamere, which journeyed to London in 1930 to protest against the proposed amalgamation scheme and the " radical " native policy of the " Labour " Government agreed to abstain from carrying on agitation and pressing their demands for the time being so as not to embarrass the Government which requires a breathing space in order to enable all of the parties of British imperialism to concentrate on the Round Table Conference, and at the same time give the " Labour " agents of imperialism an opportunity of side-tracking the question of the common roll for Indians in Kenya, a demand which might have evoked a certain amount of support from among the Indian delegates at the Conference.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Furthermore, such a manœuvre afforded the colonists' delegation an opportunity of taking the initiative of presenting a compromise platform to the Colonial Office as the basis for discussion when they return to London to give evidence before the Joint Committee this year.

As a result of this agreement the delegates went back to East Africa in November, 1930, and, after reporting to their respective constituencies, issued the following statement which appeared in the *Times* of December 6, 1930:

> Lord Delamere with the agreement of his colleagues has proposed that Kenya should seek an agreement with the Imperial Government on the following basis: (1), the Memorandum on Native Policy to be withdrawn by the Imperial Government; (2), consideration of the constitutional issues of closer union to be indefinitely postponed; (3), the Kenya settlers to agree not to press for any immediate step forward in the constitution of the colony, that is, the temporary withdrawal of the claim for an unofficial majority of the Legislature.

We can rest assured, that whatever is the outcome of this controversy, the millions of brutally-enslaved Negroes of East Africa will continue to be the victims of British imperialism on the one hand, and of local capitalists and plantation owners on the other.

What Must Be Done?

Therefore it is absolutely necessary for the revolutionary movement, especially in England, to carry on a systematic campaign exposing the villainy of the social imperialists as well as the so-called "lefts"—Maxton, Brown, Leys, Horrabin, &c., &c., who, while pretending to criticise the "Labour" Government's policy in East Africa with "left" phrases, objectively aid MacDonald and Passfield in tightening the yoke of British imperialism over the natives. Every opportunity must be utilised to mobilise the British workers in support of the following demands of the African toilers:

(1) The absolute independence of the East African colonies from the yoke of British imperialism.

(2) The confiscation of the lands owned by the European settlers, to be divided up among the native agricultural labourers.

(3) The abolition of all forms of forced labour and the policy of expropriating peasants and communal lands.

(4) Immediate abolition of all forms of taxation—Head, Poll, Hut—as well as the system of finger-printing and the carrying of the kipandis (pass). The abolition of all forms of repressive labour and racial legislation.

(5) The immediate removal of the ban against the *Kikuyu Central Association* and all other native political and labour organisations.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(6) The guaranteeing of civil rights—the right to organise, freedom of assembly, of press, and of speech. The right of natives to enter into collective bargaining and to strike.

(7) The introduction of the 8-hour day.

(8) The immediate enactment of labour legislation—insurance for the unemployed, sickness, accident, old-age and death benefits, the protection of women and youth.

(9) The establishment of free universal primary and secondary education for native children and special courses for adult workers.

(10) The abolition of the policy of militarising natives by means of service in the King's African Rifles and Labour Batallions, all of which form part of the preparation for a new imperialist war and the attack by British and other capitalist countries on the Soviet Union.

In order to carry out the above programme a great responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the organised militant workers in Britain. It is essential systematically to explain the situation in East Africa, pointing out how the natives are being robbed and exploited by all capitalist elements in Africa.

The British workers need to understand that the struggle of these colonial toilers for freedom is an inseparable part of the common struggle against the British imperialists who, by means of their ruthless policy of colonial exploitation, are able to extort super-profits and bribe the English social-fascists and trade union bureaucrats, who, in turn, aid them in finding an escape from the crisis by pumping new life into a decaying capitalist system through the active participation of the " Labour " Party, the lackeys of British imperialism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL PROBLEM[1]

By J. STALIN

[*The following is the first section of an article by Comrade Stalin which was published from Vienna in January, 1913. It represents one of the most important contributions to the discussion on the general principles of the national problem that was taking place before the war. The present translation has been made directly from the Russian.*]

I.—THE NATION.

WHAT is a nation? A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people. It is not a racial or tribal community. The modern Italian nation was formed by Romans, Germans, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, &c. The French nation represents a mixture of Gauls, Romans, Britons, Germans, &c. The same is true of the Britishers, Germans and other nations which are composed of people of different races and tribes.

Thus a nation constitutes not a racial or a tribal, but an historically constituted people.

On the other hand, it is beyond doubt that the great States of Cyrus and Alexander could not be named nations though they were formed historically, formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but accidental and loosely connected conglomerations of groups which split up and joined together depending upon the victories and defeats of this or that conqueror.

[1] *Note by the Author in* 1924. The article "Marxism and the National Problem" reflects the period of the discussions on the principles of the national problem going on in the ranks of Russian Social Democracy during the epoch of feudal-tsarist reaction a year-and-a-half before the beginning of the imperialist war, during the epoch of the growth of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia. Two theories of the Nation were in conflict at that time and, corresponding to that, there were two National programmes, viz., the Austrian which was supported by the Bund and by the Mensheviks, and the Russian which was a Bolshevik programme. The reader will find a characterisation of both tendencies in the article. Subsequent events, particularly the imperialist war and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary into separate national States, has made obvious on which side was the truth. At the present time, when Springer and Bauer are confronted with the shattered fragments of their National programme, it can hardly be possible to doubt that history has pronounced judgment on the "Austrian School." Even the Bund has had to recognise that "the demand for national-cultural autonomy (*i.e.*, of the Austrian National programme.—J.S.) put forward within the limits of the capitalist structure loses its meaning under the conditions of Socialist revolution. (Vide "11th Congress of the Bund," 1920.) The Bund does not suspect that thereby it has recognised, despairingly recognised, the untenability in principle of the theoretical bases of the Austrian National programme, the untenability in principle of the Austrian theory of the Nation.—J. Stalin.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a lasting community of people.

But not every lasting community creates a nation. Austria and Russia are also lasting communities, but no one will call them nations. What distinguishes national identity from State community? One of the distinguishing features is that national identity is impossible without a common language while to a State a common language is not necessary. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish nation in Russia would be impossibilities without a common language, while the integrity of Russia and Austria is not disturbed by the existence of a number of languages within them. We refer, of course, to the languages used by the people rather than the official languages of the Government offices.

Thus, identity of language is one of the characteristic features of nations.

This does not, of course, mean that different nations always necessarily speak different languages or that all those speaking one language necessarily constitute one nation. A common language is necessary to each nation, but different languages are not necessary to different nations.

There is no one nation which at one and the same time speaks different languages, but this does not mean that there cannot be any two nations using one and the same language. Englishmen and North Americans speak one language but do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegians and Danes, of the English and Irish.

But why do not the Englishmen and North Americans constitute one nation in spite of the identity of their languages?

Primarily because they live not together but in different territories. A nation is formed only as a result of lasting and regular intercourse, as a result of the co-existence of people from generation to generation. But a persistent life in common is impossible without a common territory. Englishmen and Americans had once inhabited one territory, England, and constituted one nation. Later a section of the Englishmen emigrated to America and here, on the new territory, eventually formed a new American nation.

Different territories led to the formation of different nations.

Thus, identity of territory is another characteristic feature of a nation.

But this is not all. Identity of territory does not in itself create a nation. This requires, in addition, internal economic connections, welding together the different sections of a nation into a single whole.

There is no such connection between England and North America, and therefore they constitute two distinct nations. But the North Americans themselves would not deserve the name of a nation had not

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the different parts of North America been bound up into an economic whole, thanks to the division of labour between them, to the development of railroads, &c.

Take Georgia, for instance. The Georgians of the pre-reform days lived on a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they did not lead a common economic life; waged for centuries wars against each other, ruining each other and inciting the Persians and Turks against each other. The ephemeral and accidental unification of the principalities which some successful King sometimes effected embraced at best the administrative circles and soon disintegrated again owing to the differences between the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could this be otherwise in economically divided Georgia. Georgia as a nation developed only in the latter half of the XIX. century, when the downfall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of roads, and the rise of capitalism, established a division of labour between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole.

The same must be said of the other nations which passed through the stage of feudalism and developed capitalism.

Thus, identity of economic life, economic contact, forms another characteristic feature of nations.

But even this is not all. In addition to the foregoing, it is necessary to take into consideration the peculiar spiritual characteristics of the people constituting a nation. Nations differ from each other not only by the conditions of their life, but also by spiritual characteristics which manifest themselves in the national culture. If England, North America and Ireland constitute three distinct nations despite identity of language, this is largely due to the peculiar psychology developed among them from generation to generation as a result of different conditions of existence.

Of course, psychology itself or, as it is otherwise called, the "national character," cannot be seized by an observer, but insofar as it manifests itself in a peculiarity of culture of the nation as a whole it is discernable and cannot be ignored.

Needless to say that the "national character" is nothing fixed once and for all, but changes together with the conditions of life; but inasmuch as it exists at any given moment, it leaves a definite imprint upon the face of the nation.

Thus, identity of psychology manifesting itself in a common culture is another of the characteristic features of a nation.

Now we have exhausted all the characteristics of a nation.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A nation is an historically developed lasting identity of language, territory, economic life, and psychology manifesting itself in identity of culture.

It goes without saying, of course, that a nation, like every other historical phenomenon is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasised that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. Moreover, the absence even of one of these characteristics is sufficient for the nation to cease to be a nation.

It is possible to imagine people with a common national character who may still not constitute a single nation if they are economically separated, if they live on different territories or speak different languages. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian mountain Jews, who do not, in our opinion, constitute a single nation.

It is possible to imagine people with a common territory and economic life who nevertheless do not constitute a single nation owing to differences in language and "national character." Such, for instance, are the Germans and Letts in the Baltic region.

Finally, the Norwegians and Danes speak one language but do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.

Only the existence of all the characteristics taken together produces a nation.

It may appear that the "national character" is not one of the characteristics but the sole essential characteristic of a nation, all the other characteristics representing only conditions for the development of the nation rather than its characteristics. This view-point is maintained by the well-known Austrian social democratic theoreticians of the national question, R. Springer, and particularly by O. Bauer.

Let us analyse their theory of the nation.[2]

According to Springer, "a nation is a union of similarly thinking and similarly speaking people. It is a cultural identity of a group of contemporaries which is not connected with country."

Thus, a union of like-minded people speaking one language, no matter how divided they may be from each other in space, no matter where they live, is a nation.

Bauer goes even further.

What is a nation? he asks. "Is it identity of language which combines people into a nation? But Englishmen and Irishmen . . . speak one

[2] *National Problems*, by A. Springer; page 43.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

language without representing a single nation. Jews have no common language, but nevertheless constitute a nation."[3]

What, then, is a nation ?

" A nation is a relative identity of character."[4]

But what is character, national character in this case ?

A national character is " a sum of features distinguishing people of one nationality from people of another, a complex of physical and spiritual qualities which distinguishes one nation from another."[5]

Bauer knows, of course, that a national character does not come down from heaven and he, therefore, adds : " The character of people is determined by nothing else but their fate," that " a nation is nothing but an identity of fate," which is in its turn determined " by the conditions under which people produce the means of life and distribute the products of their labour."[6]

Thus, we have come to the " fullest " definition of a nation according to Bauer. " A nation is a complex of people connected by an identity of character based upon an identity of fate."[7]

Thus, identity of national character is based on identity of fate, without a necessary connection with identity of territory, language or economic life.

But what then remains of the nation in such a case ? What national identity can there be among people who are economically disconnected, who live on different territories and speak different languages, from generation to generation ?

Bauer speaks of the Jews as a nation though they " have no common language " [8]; but what " identity of fate " and national connection is there, for instance, between the Georgian, Dagestan, Russian and American Jews, who are completely disunited, who live on different territories and speak different languages ?

The said Jews undoubtedly lead the same economic and political life respectively as the Georgians, Dagestanians, Americans, and live in the same cultural atmosphere as the latter ; this cannot but leave a definite impress upon their national character ; if there is anything common among them it is their religion, origin and some remnants of national character. All this is unquestionable. But is it possible seriously to maintain that petrified religious rites and some faint heritages of identical psychology affect the " fate " of the above-mentioned Jews more strongly

[3]Otto Bauer, *The National Question and Social Democracy* ; pages 1–2.
[4]Ibid ; page 6.
[5]Ibid ; page 2.
[6]Ibid ; pages 24–25.
[7]Otto Bauer, *The National Question and Social Democracy* ; page 139.
[8]Ibid. ; page 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than the vital social-economic and cultural environment? And it is only with this assumption that it is possible to speak of the Jews in general as a single nation.

What, then, distinguishes Bauer's nation from the mystic and self-sufficient "national spirit" of the spiritualists?

Bauer draws a sharp line between the "distinctive feature" of nations (the national character) and the "conditions" of their life. But what is the national character except the reflection of the conditions of life, an impress of the influences of the environment? How is it possible to be limited to the national character alone, isolating and separating it from the conditions which gave rise to it?

Further, what distinguished the English nation from the North American nation at the end of the XVIII. and beginning of the XIX. century when North America was still known as New England?

Not the national character, of course, for the North Americans were emigrants from England who took with them to America not only the English language but also the English national character and could not, of course, have lost it so fast, though under the conditions of the new life they naturally developed their own peculiar character. Still, despite this certain identity of character they constituted a distinct nation. Apparently, New England as a nation differed from England as a nation not by a special national character, or not so much by the national character as by distinct conditions of life.

Thus it is clear that in reality there is no single feature distinguishing a nation. There is only a sum of features under which, when nations are compared, either one (national character) or another (language) or a third (territory, economic conditions) appears in sharper relief. A nation constitutes a combination of all the characteristics taken together.

Bauer's point of view which regards the nation as identical with the national character removes the nation away from its basis and converts it into a sort of self-sufficient force. The result is not a living and acting nation but something mystical, invisible and other-worldly. For, I repeat, what sort of a Jewish nation is it that consists of Georgian, Dagestanian, Russian, American and other Jews, the members of which do not understand each other (for they speak different languages), live in different parts of the globe, never see each other, never act together, whether in times of peace or of war? No, it is not for such paper "nations" that the Social Democracy is working out its national programme. It can take into consideration only real, living nations which lead a common national life and are able to make themselves be reckoned with.

Bauer apparently confuses the nation, which constitutes an historical category, with the race which constitutes an ethnographic category.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

However, Bauer himself seems to feel the weakness of his position. While definitely declaring the Jews to be a nation at the beginning of his book,[9] Bauer corrects himself at the end stating that " the capitalist system makes it impossible for them (the Jews) to survive as a nation,"[10] and assimilates them together with the other nations.

The reason appears to be that " the Jews have no isolated region for colonisation,"[11] while the Czechs, for instance, have such a territory, and according to Bauer, will survive as a nation.

In short, the reason lies in the absence of a common territory.

In arguing thus, Bauer wanted to say that national autonomy cannot be the demand of the European workers,[12] but he thereby overthrew his own theory which denies identity of territory as one of the characteristics of a nation.

But Bauer goes even further. At the beginning of his book he definitely declares that " the Jews have no common language, but nevertheless constitute a nation.[13] But on page 130 he makes a change of front and declares just as definitely " unquestionably no nation is possible without a common language."

Bauer wanted to say that " language is a most important instrument of human intercourse,"[14] but at the same time he involuntarily proved something which he did not mean to prove, namely, the untenability of his own theory of a nation, which denies the importance of identity of language.

Thus, does the theory which is sewn together by idealistic threads overthrow itself.

(*To be continued.*)

[9]Page 2 of his book.
[10]Ibid, page 389.
[11]Ibid ; page 388.
[12]Ibid ; page 396.
[13]Ibid. ; page 2.
[14]Ibid. ; page 130.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The World of Labour

BURMA

The following Manifesto dealing with recent events in Burma has been issued by the British section of the International League against Imperialism.

The Torturing of Burma.

BRITISH Imperialist terror has fastened on Burma with bloody hands. In the war of extermination undertaken against starving peasants, it is admitted by Wedgwood Benn, the Labour Secretary of State for India, that probably over 1,000 " rebels " have been killed. This reluctant official admission is almost certainly a considerable understatement. At the same time the troops used suffer hardly a score of casualties. What can this imply but merciless slaughter of unarmed people.

Not content with this, British imperialism executes and jails its prisoners. Many have been deported for life to the Andaman Islands. On one day, May 9th, Reuter reported fifteen " rebels " sentenced to death and 56 sentenced to transportation for life. Can such blood lust be paralleled under the rule of even the most barbarous despotism ?

And the war continues. The present garrison which is being reinforced by further troops from India consists of the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) and Punjabi troops. Aeroplanes are also being used. The R.A.F. bombing squadron from Singapore has been employed to bomb the Burmese in the jungles.

The British Imperialist Press seeks to befog a plain economic situation by describing the origin and motives of the rebellion in Burma as " most obscure." Owing to the world fall in the price of rice and timber, the principal products of Burma, the agricultural workers and small farmers are starving, but despite the economic ruin of the people, the Burma military police, 10,000 strong with forty commissioned British officers, continue their work of extorting the heavy capitation-tax from the moneyless peasantry. The Burmese worker has to choose between arrest by the police for non-payment of taxes and being butchered by imperialism should he join with his fellows in the movement of revolt against alien rule and exploitation.

In addition to the military and police oppression the Viceroy, Irwin, who has since been rewarded with the Garter for his services to British imperialism, promulgated in Burma an ordinance on the lines of the Bengal Ordinance which provides power of arrest without warrant and trial without jury, while any individual addressing a public meeting in Burma is liable to arrest under Section 144 (A) of the Indian Penal Code.

The Nationalist organisation of the peasants and small farmers, the General Council of Burmese Associations, the leader of which was U. Soe Thein, whose

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

telegram of protest against separation of Burma from India was so cunningly withheld from the Round Table Conference by Messrs. Benn and MacDonald, has been declared illegal and its local branches have been suspended.

The Police violence has been extreme. At least 20 villages and 300 houses have been burnt. Workers have succumbed in the jails as the result of their handling by the police. Prisoners have even been robbed in the jails of their personal belongings, and then released in return for a money payment to the police by their relatives. Besides making free with the private property of the villagers the police are stated to adopt an insulting attitude towards the women in the villages. Buddhist monasteries have been set on fire and images of Buddha smashed by the police. Some Buddhist priests who were suspected and accused by the police of supporting the revolutionaries were arrested and beaten by the police with the butts of their rifles after being bound with ropes. The persecution of the poor peasants of Burma by the police has been compared to the hunting of wild animals in a forest.

British workers, who are themselves caught in the net of imperialist exploitation, cannot remain passive in the face of such hideous bloodshed and cruelty. The workers and peasants of Burma, whose revolt is part of the world-wide rising of the subject colonial peoples against imperialism, confidently look to the British workers for sympathy in their suffering and solidarity in their struggle.

The bloody oppression of British imperialism in the colonies will be glorified on Empire Day by the Labour Government, the Churches and the militarists. The League against Imperialism calls upon British workers, in demonstrating against this dishonourable festival, to organise everywhere meetings, and to pass resolutions of protest against the torturing of Burma and the reign of terror in the colonies of the British Empire.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Edward Carpenter—In Appreciation. Essays edited by Gilbert Beith. (Allen and Unwin.) 246 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Soviet as the Form of Proletarian Dictatorship. Outline No. 7 for a Marxist-Leninist School. (C.P.G.B.) 14 pp. 2d.

India. An Essay. Introductory to twelve Broadcast Talks. B.B.C. Pamphlet No. 67. 44 pp. 3d.

Youth in Industry. Grace Hutchins. (International Pamphlet Inc.) 32 pp. 5d.

A New Reform Bill. Mrs. Sidney Webb. Fabian Tract No. 236. 24 pp. 2d.

The World Calendar. Elizabeth Achelis. (The World Calendar Association Inc.) 24 pp. Gratis.

Union-Management Co-operation on the Railroads. Louis Aubrey Wood. (Yale University Press.) 326 pp. 18s.

Prepare for Action! Engineers! Smash the Employers' Attack. Manchester District Metalworkers Minority Movement. 20 pp. 1d.

The Paris Commune. William Siegel. (International Pamphlets Inc.) 32 pp. 6d.

The Heritage of Gene Debs. Alexander Trachtenberg. (International Pamphlets Inc.) 32 pp. 5d.

The History of May Day. Alexander Trachtenberg. (International Pamphlets Inc.) 32 pp. 6d.

Capitalism or Socialism in Britain? R. Palme Dutt. (C.P.G.B.) 34 pp. 3d.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOK REVIEW

POPULATION THEORY AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

Place on Population. Reprinted from 1822. With Introduction by Prof. Norman Himes. (G. Allen and Unwin Ltd. 12s. 6d.)

TO-DAY, when Capitalist Governments hold International Conferences, vainly seeking for means to dispose of a 400 million bushel wheat surplus, it may seem fatuous to spend time on a book written round a thesis that :—

> The perpetual tendency of the race of man to increase beyond the means of subsistence is one of the general laws of animated nature. (Malthus.)

Facts appear to give an adequate reply.

But, if only to understand how class bias blinds the eyes of bourgeois professors to facts and turns them into abject apologists of capitalism, it is worthy of perusal. For example, we read in the Introduction by Norman Himes (Professor of Economics at Clarke University, U.S.A.) :

> The validity of Malthus' central doctrines stands out so much more clearly in our day than it did in 1822.

The book, however, has a greater value than the mere exposure of present-day bourgeois professors. It enables us to obtain a correct perspective of the positions of Godwin, Malthus and Francis Place in the class struggles of their period. The book itself is a product of that class struggle.

> To gain a full comprehension of the circumstances surrounding the production of Place's work one must needs go back to the appearance of Godwin's " Political Justice " (1793) and " Enquirer " (1795), which works . . . . prompted Malthus, owing to the Utopian, Perfectionist, Equalitarian and Anarchist views there propounded, to publish the now famous Essay. (Introduction, page 11.)

Godwin's Utopian Socialism was feared by the ruling class.

> Many shrank in horror from his (Godwin's) equalitarian theories . . . what would happen to the material and social interests of the British upper class if political and economic equality should become the creed of the Masses. Would it usher in violent Revolution ? (Introduction, page 17.)

The result was that Malthus' Essay on Population was widely acclaimed by the ruling class who were—

> receptive to any theory that would shift the responsibility from their shoulders to those of the labourers themselves. (Introduction, page 19.)

Marx characterised the Essay as a "schoolboyish plagiary." Francis Place, who had influence in the ranks of the workers through his contact with the Corresponding Societies considered it an inadequate reply because openly reactionary. To-day, MacDonald and Maxton cover the open reaction of Churchill and Jix. So, then, Place intervened to reinforce Malthus' position and finally break the influence of Godwin. Even our bourgeois Professor can see this.

> Place feared the influence on the working class of Godwin's Population view. (Introduction, page 35.)
>
> Moreover, he knew that Malthus' character was being *maligned . . . . by working-class leaders.* Might not his defence be forthcoming with propriety from one whose Malthusianism *and whose interests in the welfare of the lower orders were both indisputable.* (My italics.)

To achieve his purpose, Francis Place adopts three expedients : (*a*) Exposes the inconsistency of Godwin's reasoning, while making minor concessions to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his view that Government and social relations influence the conditions of the Masses. (b) Defends Malthus' character and objectives against the attack of working-class leaders. (c) Modifies Malthus' thesis, while retaining the fundamental basis.

His defence of Malthus' character is worthy of note and can be brought out by three quotations.

> The object at which Mr. Malthus aims is the comfort and happiness of the great Mass of the people. (Page 135.)
>
> Mr. Malthus denies to the unemployed poor man the right to eat, but he allows the right to the unemployed rich man. . . . A man, he says, *has no right to exist* (Place's italics) if another man cannot, or will not, employ him at some kind of labour. (Page 136.)
>
> Mr. Malthus must, however, be acquitted of any design to do any injury to the working people." (Page 148.)

Place's modification of Malthus' thesis, however, is of some merit, in that he takes the question from the biological basis of Malthus, to an economic basis governed by the conditions of capitalist development. The means of subsistence, even then, were obviously growing rapidly and exposing Malthus. Place raises the query—

> But, it is asked, how does it happen that so many people are in a state of wretchedness, since there has been such an increase in wealth and means of comfortable subsistence. . . . If the people increase *faster than the capital which alone can provide beneficent employment . . . the real price of labour will fall.* (Page 223.)
>
> He (Place) argued that the only way labourers could permanently extend their welfare was by increasing more slowly than capital accumulated. (Introduction, pages 41-2.)

Here, apparently, was a logical argument, based on a study of economic facts.

But, in entering the field of economics to counter the vague idealism of the Utopian Socialists, ideological defenders of capitalism encountered a more formidable enemy—Marxism! Prof. Himes merely mentions the name of Marx as a critic of Francis Place. He dared not do more, as a glance at Capital, Vol. 1, Chapter 25 will show a complete and irrefutable analysis.

> It is capitalist accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of labourers..... (Page 691, Kerr Edition.)
>
> Since the demand for labour is determined not by the amount of capital as a whole, but by its variable constituent alone, that demand falls progressively with the increase in the total capital, instead of, as previously assumed, rising in proportion to it. (Ibid, page 690.)
>
> Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole..... (Ibid, page 709.)

To-day, when we see huge masses of capital under rationalisation yielding a mass output of commodities, yet only giving employment to a mere handful of workers the truth of the Marxian position is self-evident.

But, while capitalism, with its mass unemployment justifies Marx, so too is the Soviet Union in a practical manner by wiping out unemployment proving that there is no " perpetual tendency . . . . to increase the means of subsistence," and demonstrating that:

> every special historic mode of production has its own special laws of population, historically valid within its limits alone. (Capital, Vol. I. Kerr Edition, p. 693).

J. R. S.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Socialism's Challenge to Capitalism

ANTI-SOVIET CRUSADE

BE PREPARED!

To keep up to date with the War preparations of the Anti-Soviet Elements, you must read the

DAILY WORKER

from your agents or direct from

41 TABERNACLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.2

LABOUR RESEARCH

the MONTHLY CIRCULAR of the Labour Research Department

JUNE, 1931

Vol. XX
No. 6

It contains all the Facts about the Economic and Political Situation on which to base your agitation.

Price 3d. each: 2s. per dozen to affiliated Societies. Write to see whether your Society is affiliated.

Send us a bulk order.

Labour Research Department
79 WARREN ST., W.1

Price 3d.

"RUSSIA TO-DAY"

(Illustrated Monthly)

The official organ of the F.O.S.U. movement. Published at the beginning of each month. Contains the latest information, special articles on particular subjects and many splendid photographs of life and work in the Soviet Union.

Price 2d. Post paid, 3d. 1s. 9d. dozen, post paid.

Annual Subscription, 3s., post paid.

The Friends of Soviet Union,
79 WARREN STREET, LONDON, W.1

Write for particulars of Membership

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Four Factories at your Service

From small beginnings, the ever-increasing business of the

Leicester Co-operative CPS Printing Society Ltd

now occupies four complete factories devoted to the production of High-class Printing, Lithography, Cartons, Account Books, Boxes for Shoe and Hosiery Trades, &c., &c. . . .

Selected highly-skilled operatives, in conjunction with the latest automatic machinery and modern facilities ensures *EFFICIENT SERVICE AND QUALITY OF OUTPUT.*

LEICESTER CO-OPERATIVE PRINTING SOCIETY LTD.

BOX FACTORY:
Short Street,
Leicester.

LEICESTER:
Head Office,
CHURCH GATE.

LONDON:
58 Gough St., W.C.1.
KETTERING:
24 King Street.

Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 79 Warren Street, W.1, and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 99 Church Gate, Leicester.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED